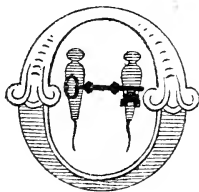


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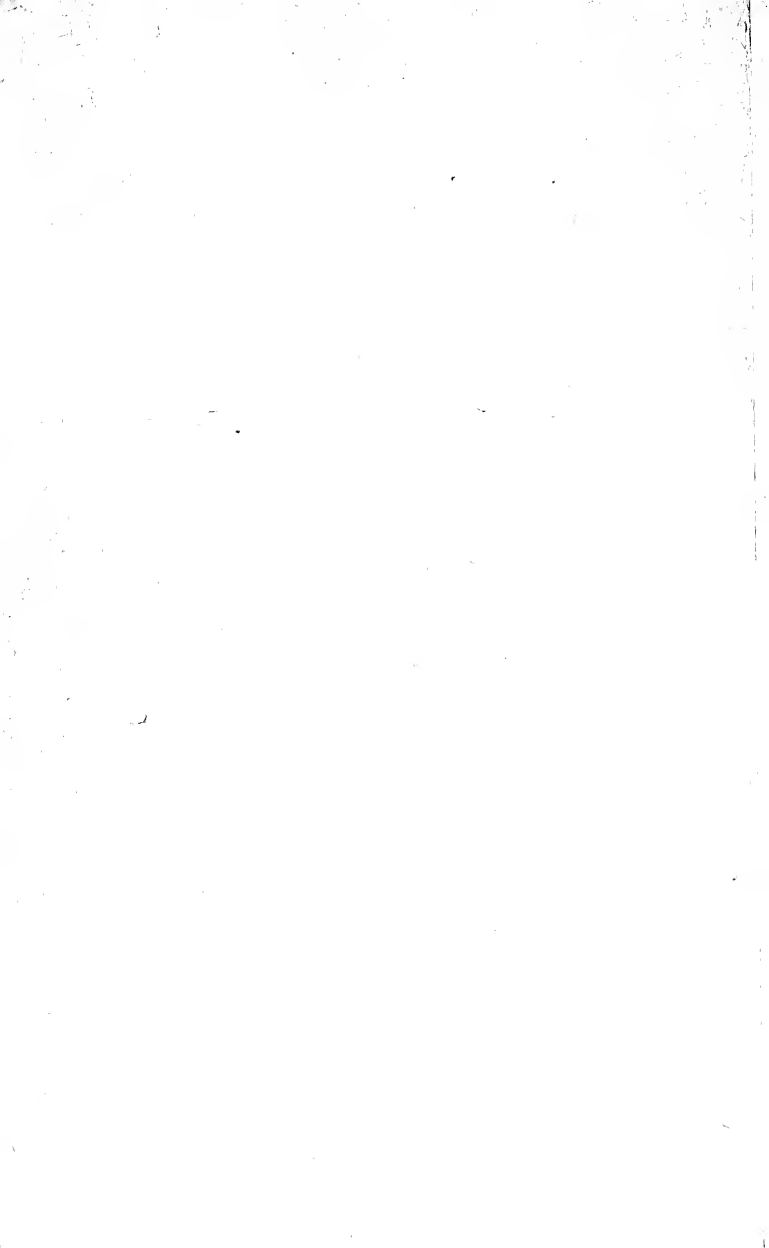
MISS JOSEPHINE BARNES HALL

IN MEMORY OF HER FATHER

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WILEY AND PUTNAM'S

CHOICE READING.

BOOK OF CHRISTMAS.



T. Lakey Hall

THE

BOOK OF CHRISTMAS;

DESCRIPTIVE OF THE

CUSTOMS, CEREMONIES, TRADITIONS, SUPERSTITIONS, FUN,
FEELING, AND FESTIVITIES OF

THE CHRISTMAS SEASON.

BY THOMAS K. HERVEY.

NEW-YORK:

WILEY & PUTNAM, 161 BROADWAY.

1845.

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P R E F A C E .

AMONGST the number of elegant publications which issue from the press, at this festival period of the year,—and are prepared for the express amusement of this particular season, it is matter of some surprise that no one of them should have undertaken to illustrate the festival itself, and give some account of the season which they are so designed to embellish. The number of popular observances by which this time is marked, and the peculiar character of the revels which enliven it—with the fact that their practice is known to almost all, and their full meaning and origin to comparatively few—might, naturally, have suggested to the literary purveyors for the period that a work which should give a full, detailed, and connected history of this festival, its ceremonies and traditions, would form as agreeable a literary gift as could be planned for this epoch of gifts,—and would, besides, have a permanent and useful interest, which should take it out of the class of ephemera, and give it a value, at all seasons.

It is under this impression that the present work has been undertaken by its publisher ;—and the editor has availed himself of every source of information which occurred to him, as likely to aid him in rendering it complete. In order to give anything like an entire view of the subject, it was necessary, at times, to go more into antiquarian details than may be approved of by the general reader ;—

whilst the wish to preserve a popular tone, induced the editor occasionally to restrict himself in those more elaborate inquiries, into which another class of readers would willingly have followed him. It has, of course, been his object to steer as fair a middle course between these extremes as he could ;—sacrificing nothing that was essential to the full elucidation of the subject,—and not dwelling unnecessarily, after that object was attained, on any of the dryer details, which might have failed to interest the general reader.

The subject is a very full one ;—and the materials, though very loosely scattered about, are very copious. It was found absolutely necessary, therefore, to limit the present volume to a review of the festival and its observances, as they exist in *England*—only occasionally adverting to the practices of other countries, where they throw immediate light on the customs of this.

If, then, our readers shall be amused or instructed by our gossip, at the winter fire, we hope to meet them in the fields, and upon the hills, amongst the flowers of spring and the fruits of autumn ;—to dance with them beneath the May-pole, and join them in the merry revels of the Harvest-home.

The Editor cannot suffer himself to omit this opportunity of acknowledging his obligations to Mr. CROFTON CROCKER, for some very valuable assistance.

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THE
BOOK OF CHRISTMAS.

INTRODUCTORY CHAPTER.

We take no note of time,
But from its loss ;—to give it, then, a tongue
Is wise in man.

DR. YOUNG.

To give a language to time, for the preservation of its records, and the utterance of its lessons, has been amongst the occupations of man, from the day when first he found himself in its mysterious presence, down to these latter ages of the world ;—and yet, all the resources of his ingenuity, impelled by all the aspirations of his heart, have only succeeded in supplying it with an imperfect series of hieroglyphics, difficult in their acquirement and uncertain in their use. Ages upon ages of the young world have passed away, of which the old hath no chronicle. Generations after generations of men have “made their bed in the darkness,” and left no monuments. Of the crowded memorials reared by others along the stream of time, many (and those the mightiest) are written in a cypher, of which the key is lost. The wrappings of the mummy are letters of a dead language ; and no man can translate the ancient story of the pyramid !

We have learnt to speak of time, because it is that portion of eternity with which we have *presently* to do,—as if it were a whit more intelligible—less vague, abstract, and unimaginable—than that eternity of which it is a part. He who can conceive of the one, must be able to embrace the awful image of the other. We

think of time as of a section of eternity, separated and intrenched by absolute *limits* ;—and thus, we seem to have arrived at a definite idea, surrounded by points on which the mind can rest. But, when the imagination sets out upon the actual experiment,—and discovers that those limits are not assignable, save on one only side,—and finds but a single point on which to rest its failing wing,—and looks from thence, along an expanse whose boundaries are nowhere else within the range of its restricted vision,—then does the mortal bird return into its mortal nest, wearied with its ineffectual flight ; and convinced that a shoreless ocean, and one whose shores it cannot see, are alike formless and mysterious to its dim and feeble gaze.

And yet, notwithstanding the connexion of these two ideas—of time and of eternity—(the notion of the former being only reached through the latter)—we deal familiarly, and even jestingly, with the one, while the mind approaches the other with reverential awe. Types, and symbols, and emblems—and those ever of a grave meaning—are the most palpable expressions which we venture to give to our conceptions of the one ; whilst the other we figure and personify,—and that, too often, after a fashion in which the better part of the moral is left unrepresented. Yet, who shall personify time ! And who that has ever tried it, in the silence of his chamber, and the stillness of his heart, hath not bowed down, in breathless awe, before the solemn visions which his conjuration has awakened ! Oh ! the mysterious shapes which time takes, when it rises up into the mind, as an image, at those hours of lonely inquisition !—“ And he said unto her, What form is he of ? And she said, An *old man* cometh up ; and he is *covered with a mantle*.”—The mysterious presence which it assumes “ in thoughts from the visions of the night, when deep sleep falleth on men ! ”—Who, as he strove to collect the mournful attributes about which his fancy had been busy, into an impersonation, hath not suddenly felt as if “ a spirit passed before *his* face ! . . . It stood still, but *he* could not discern the form thereof : an image was before his eyes, there was silence ; ” and out of that silence hath seemed to come a voice, like that which whispered to Job—“ They that dwell in houses of clay, whose foundation is in the dust, which are crushed before the moth, they are destroyed from

morning to evening: they perish for ever, without any regarding it."

Time, abstractedly considered, as what, in truth, it is—a portion of the vast ocean of eternity—a river flowing from the sea, and flowing to the sea—a channel leading from deep to deep, through shores on which the races of the world are permitted to build for awhile, until the great waters shall once more cover all, and time, *as time*, "shall be no more,"—must long have defied the skill of man to map out its surface, and write his memorials upon its impalpable bosom. The thousand keels that sweep over the visible waters of the world, leave on their face traces of their passage more legible and enduring, than do the generations of men, as they come and go, on that viewless and voiceless stream. The ingenuity which has taught man to lay down the plan of the material ocean,—to assign to each spot on its uniform surface, its positive whereabouts and actual relation,—and, by a series of imaginary lines and figures, to steer his way across its pathless solitudes, with a knowledge as certain as that which guides him amidst the substantive and distinctive features of the solid earth,—is scarcely more admirable than that which, by a similar device, has enabled him to measure out the expanse of the silent river,—to cover, as it were, its surface with a crowd of imaginary latitudes and longitudes, intersecting each other at all points,—and to ascertain, at any moment, by observation, his relative position on the great stream of time.

How long the unaided genius of man might have been, ere it could have fallen upon a scheme for the one achievement or the other, if left to struggle with its own resources, and unassisted by hints from without, we need not conjecture. But, in each case, the solution of the problem was suggested to him, as the materials for working it are still furnished, by the finger of God, himself. The great architect of the universe hath planted in its frame all necessary models and materials for the guidance and use of its human inhabitants; leaving them to the exercise of those powers and capacities with which they have been furnished, to improve the lessons and apply the examples thus conveyed. In each of the cases of which we have spoken, the constellations which surround the world, and "are the poetry of heaven," have been

the sources of the inspiration,—as they are still the lights by which that inspiration works. The hand that fashioned the “two great lights,” and appointed to them their courses, and gave them, to be “for signs, and for seasons, and for days and years,” pointed out to man how he might, by the observation of their revolutions, direct his course along the unbroken stream of time, or count its waves as they flowed silently and ceaselessly away. The sun and moon were the ancient (and, at first, the only) measures of time—as they are the essential foundations of all the modes by which man measures it, now; and in the order of the world’s architecture, the “watches of the element” which guide us yet, were framed and “set in the firmament of heaven,” at that distant and uncertain period, whose “evening and morning were the fourth day.”

Nor did the beneficent power which erected these great meters of time, in the constitution of the universe, leave the world without suggestions how their use might be improved, in the business of more minute subdivision. The thousand natural inequalities of the earth’s surface, and the vegetable columns which spring from its bosom, furnish—as do the spires and towers and columns which man rears thereon—so many gnomons of the vast dial, on which are unerringly written, with the finger of shadow, the shining records of the sky. There is something unutterably solemn in watching the shade creep, day by day, round a circle whose diameter man might measure with his grave, or even cover with his hand,—and contrasting the limits within which it acts with the spaces of time which its stealing tread measures out,—and feeling that it is the faithful index of a progress, before which the individual being and the universal frame of things are alike hastening to rapid and inevitable decay. There are few types more awfully representative of that which they typify than is the shadow. It is Time almost made visible. Through it, the mind reaches the most vivid impersonation of that mysterious idea which it is capable of containing. It seems as if flung directly from his present and passing wing.—The silent and ceaseless motion—gliding for ever on and on,—coming round again and again, but reverting never and tarrying never—blotting out the sun-shine as it passes, and leaving no trace where it has passed—

make it the true and solemn symbol of him—the old unresting and unreturning one—who receded not, even when that same shadow went back on the dial of the king of Judah, nor paused when the sun stood still in the midst of heaven, and the moon lingered over the valley of Ajalon! Of that mysterious type and its awful morals, a lost friend of ours* has already spoken better than we can hope to speak!—and as he is (“*alas! that he is so!*”) already one whose “sun shall no more go down, neither shall *his* moon withdraw itself,”—we will avail ourselves of a language which deserves to be better known,—and sounds all the more solemnly, that he who uttered it hath since furnished in his own person, a fresh verification of the solemn truths which he sung so well.

“Upon a dial-stone,
Behold the shade of Time,
For ever circling, on and on
In silence more sublime
Than if the thunders of the spheres
Pealed forth its march to mortal ears!

“It meets us hour by hour,
Doles out our little span,
Reveals a presence and a power
Felt and confessed by man;—
The drop of moments, day by day,
That rocks of ages wear away.

“Woven by a hand unseen,
Upon that stone, survey
A robe of dark, sepulchral green,
The mantle of decay,—
The fold of chill oblivion’s pall,
That falleth with yon shadow’s fall!

“Day is the time for toil,—
Night balms the weary breast,—
Stars have their vigils,—seas, awhile,
Will sink to peaceful rest;—
But round and round the shadow creeps
Of that which slumbers not—nor sleeps!

* The late John Malcolm, of Edinburgh.

“Effacing all that’s fair,—
Hushing the voice of mirth
Into the silence of despair,
Around the lonesome hearth,
And training ivy-garlands green
O’er the once gay and social scene.

“In beauty fading fast
Its silent trace appears ;
And where—a phantom of the past,
Dim in the mist of years—
Gleams Tadmor o’er oblivion’s waves,
Like wrecks above their ocean-graves.

“Before the ceaseless shade
That round the world doth sail,
Its towers and temples bow the head,—
The pyramids look pale,—
The festal halls grow hushed and cold,—
The everlasting hills wax old !

“Coeval with the sun,
Its silent course began,
And still its phantom-race shall run,
Till worlds with age grow wan,—
Till darkness spread her funeral pall,
And one vast shadow circle all !”

To the great natural divisions of time (with their aid—and guided by these hints), the ingenuity of man, under the direction of his wants, has been busy, since the world began, in adding artificial ones ; while his heart has been active in supplying impulses, and furnishing devices, to that end. Years, and months, and days,—the periods marked out by the revolutions of our celestial guides,—have been aggregated and divided, after methods almost as various as the nations of the earth. Years have been composed into cycles, and olympiads, and generations, and reigns, and months resolved into decades and weeks,—days into hours,—and hours into subdivisions, which have been again subdivided, almost to the confines of thought. Yet, it is only in these latter ages of the world, that a measurement has been attained, at once so minute, and so closely harmonizing with the motions, and regulated by the revolutions, of the dials of the sky,

that—had the same machinery existed from the commencement of time (with the art of printing to preserve its results),—the history of the past might be perused with its discrepancies reconciled, and many of its blanks supplied: and, could the world agree upon its uniform adoption now (together with that of a common epoch, to reckon from), comparative chronology would be no longer a science applicable to the future; and history, for the time to come (in so far as it is a mere record of facts), would present few problems but such as “he who runs may read.”

But out of these conventional and multiplied divisions of time,—these wheels within the great wheel,—arise results far more important than the verification of a chronological series, or the establishment of the harmonies of history. Through them, not only may the ages of the world be said to intercommunicate, and the ends of the earth, in a sense, to meet, but, by their aid, the whole business of the life of nations and of individuals is regulated, and a set of mnemonics established upon which hinges the history of the human heart. By the multiplied but regular system of recurrences thus obtained, order is made to arise out of the web of duties and the chaos of events;—and at each of the thousand points marked out on these concentric circles, are written their appropriate duties, and recorded their special memories. The calendar of every country is thus covered over with a series of events, whose recollection is recalled, and influence kept alive, by the return of the cycles, in their ceaseless revolution, to those spots at which the record of each has been written;—and acts of fasting or of festival, of social obligation or of moral observance,—many of which would be surely lost or overlooked, amidst the inextricable confusion in which, without this systematic arrangement, they must be mingled,—are severally pointed out by the moving finger of Time, as he periodically reaches the place of each, on his concentric dials.

But, besides the calendar of general direction and national observance, where is the heart that has not a private calendar of its own! Long ere the meridian of life has been attained, the individual man has made many a memorandum, of joy or pain, for his periodical perusal,—and established many a private celebra-

tion, pleasant or mournful, of his own. How many a lost hope and blighted feeling, which the heart is the better for recalling, and would not willingly forget, would pass from the mind, amid the crowd, and noise, and bustle of the world, but for these tablets, on which it is ineffaceably written, and yearly read ! How many an act of memory, with its store of consolations and its treasure of warnings, would remain postponed, amid the interests of the present, till it came to be forgotten altogether, but for that system which has marked its positive place upon the wheels of time, and brings the record certainly before the mental eye, in their unvarying revolution ! Many are the uses of these diaries of the heart. By their aid, something is saved from the wrecks of the past for the service of the present ;—the lights of former days are made to throw pleasant reflections upon many an after period of life ;—the weeds which the world and its cares had fostered, are, again and again, cleared away from the sweet and wholesome fountain of tears ;—the fading inscriptions of other years are renewed, to yield their morals to the future ;—and the dead are restored, for a fleeting hour of sweet communion, or hold high and solemn converse with us, from the graves in which we laid them years ago.

And this result of the minute and accurate partitions of time, which consists in the establishment of a series of points for periodic celebration, is, as regards its public and social operation, more important than may at first sight appear. The calendar of almost every country is, as we have observed, filled with a series of anniversaries,—religious or secular,—of festival or abstinence—or instituted for the regulation of business or the operations of the law. In England, independently of those periods of observance which are common to the realm, and written in her calendar, there are few districts which are without some festival peculiar to themselves ; originating in the grant of some local charter or privilege, the establishment of some local fair, the influence of some ancient local superstition—or some other cause, of which, in many cases, the sole remaining trace is the observance to which it has given rise ; and which observance does not always speak in language sufficiently clear to give any account of its parent. Around each of these celebrations has grown up a set

of customs, and traditions, and habits, the examination into which has led to many an useful result; and which are, for the most part, worth preserving, as well for their picturesque aspect and social character, as for the sake of the historic chambers which they may yet help us to explore. Their close resemblance, as existing amongst different nations, has formed an element in the solution of more than one problem, which had for its object a chapter of the history of the world; and they may be said, in many cases, to furnish an apparent link of connection between generations of men, long divided and dwelling far apart. They form, too, amid the changes which time is perpetually effecting in the structure of society, a chain of connexion between the present and former times of the same land: and prevent the national individuality from being wholly destroyed. They tend to preserve some similarity in the moral aspect of a country from epoch to epoch,—and, without having force enough to act as drags on the progress of society towards improvement, they serve for a feature of identification, amid all its forms. Curious illustrations they are, too, of national history; and we learn to have confidence in its records, when we find, in some obscure nook, the peasant of to-day, who troubles himself little with the lore of events and their succession, doing that which some ancient chronicler tells us his ancestors did, a thousand years ago,—and keeping, in all simplicity, some festival, the story of whose origin we find upon its written page.

To the philosophic inquirer, few things are more important, in the annals of nations, than their festivals, their anniversaries, and their public celebrations of all kinds. In nothing is their peculiar character more strikingly exhibited. They show a people in its undress, acting upon its impulses, and separated from the conventions and formalities of its every-day existence. We may venture to say that, could we, in the absence of every other record, be furnished with a complete account of the festivals, traditions, and anniversaries of any given nation, now extinct, not only might a correct estimate be, therefrom, made of their progress in morals and civilisation, but a conjectural history of their doings be hazarded, which should bear a closer resemblance to the facts

than many an existing history, constructed from more varied materials.

For these reasons,—and some others which are more personal and less philosophical,—we love all old traditions and holiday customs. Like honest Sir Andrew Ague-cheek, we “delight in masques and revels, sometimes altogether.” Many a happy chance has conducted us, unpremeditatedly, into the midst of some rustic festival, whose recollection is amongst our pleasant memories yet ;—and many an one have we gone venturously forth to seek,—when we dwelt in the more immediate neighborhood of the haunts to which, one by one, these traditionary observances are retiring before the face of civilisation ! The natural tendency of time to obliterate ancient customs, and silence ancient sports, is too much promoted by the utilitarian spirit of the day ; and they who would have no man enjoy, without being able to give a reason for the enjoyment which is in him, are robbing life of half its beauty, and some of its virtues. If the old festivals and hearty commemorations, in which our land was once so abundant,—and which obtained for her, many a long day since, the name of “ merry England,”—had no other recommendation than their *convivial* character—the community of enjoyment which they imply—they would, on that account alone, be worthy of all promotion, as an antidote to the cold and selfish spirit which is tainting the life-blood and freezing the pulses of society. “ ’Tis good to be merry and wise ;”—but the wisdom which eschews mirth, and holds the time devoted to it as so much wasted, by being taken from the schoolmaster, is very questionable wisdom in itself, and assuredly not made to promote the happiness of nations. We love all commemorations. We love these anniversaries, for their own sakes, and for their uses. We love those Lethes of an hour, which have a virtue beyond their gift of oblivion ; and, while they furnish a temporary forgetfulness of many of the ills of life, revive the memory of many a past enjoyment, and re-awaken many a slumbering affection. We love those mile-stones on the journey of life, beside which man is called upon to pause, and take a reckoning of the distance he has passed, and of that which he may have yet to go. We love to reach those free open spaces at which the cross-roads of the world converge ; and where

we are sure to meet, as at a common rendezvous, with travellers from its many paths. We love to enter those houses of refreshment, by the way-side of existence, where we know we shall encounter with other wayfarers like ourselves—perchance with friends long separated, and whom the chances of the world keep far apart—and from whence, after a sweet communion, and lusty festival, and needful rest, we may go forth upon our journey new fortified against its accidents, and strengthened for its toils. We love those festivals which have been made, as Washington Irving says, “the season for gathering together of family connexions, and drawing closer, again, those bonds of kindred hearts, which the cares, and pleasures, and sorrows of the world are continually operating to cast loose; of calling back the children of a family, who have launched forth in life, and wandered widely asunder, once more to assemble about the paternal hearth, that rallying place of the affections, there to grow young and loving again, among the endearing mementos of childhood.” Above all, we love those seasons (“for pity is not common!” says the old ballad) which call for the exercise of a general hospitality, and give the poor man his few and precious glimpses of a plenty, which, as the world is managed, his toil cannot buy;—which shelter the houseless wanderer, and feed the starving child, and clothe the naked mother, and spread a festival for all. Those seasons which, in their observance by our ancestors, kept alive, by periodical re-awakenings, the flame of charity which, thus, had scarcely time wholly to expire, during all the year. We love all which tends to call man from the solitary and chilling pursuit of his own separate and selfish views, into the warmth of a common sympathy, and within the bands of a common brotherhood. We love these commemorations, as we have said, for themselves—we love them for their uses—and still more we love them for the memories of our boyhood! Many a bright picture do they call up in our minds,—and in the minds of most who have been amongst their observers; for with these festivals of the heart are inalienably connected many a memory, for sorrow or for joy—many a scene of early love—many a merry meeting which was yet the last—many a parting of those who shall part no more—many a joyous group, composed of materials which separated only too soon, and

shall never be put together again on earth—many a lost treasure and many a perished hope,—

“ Hopes that were angels in their birth,
But perished young, like things of earth.”

Happy, happy days were they :—“ O ! their record is lively in my soul !” and there is a happiness, still, in looking back to them :—

“ Ye are dwelling with the faded flowers,
Ye are with the suns long set,
But oh ! your memory, gentle hours,
Is a living vision yet !”

Yet are they, for the most part, eras to count our losses by. Beside them, in the calendar of the heart, is written many a private note, not to be read without bitter tears :—

“ There’s many a lad I loved is gone,
And many a lass grown old ;
And when, at times, I think thereon,
My weary heart grows cold.”

“ Oh ! the mad days that I have spent,” says old Justice Shallow, “ and to see how many of mine old acquaintance are dead !” Yet still, we love these commemorations ; and hail them, each and all, as the year restores them to us, shorn and scarred as they are. And though, many and many a time, the welcome has faltered on our lips, as we “ turned from all they brought to all they could not bring,” still, by God’s help, we will enjoy them, as yet we may,—drawing closer to us, and with the more reason, the friends that still remain, and draining, to the last,

“ One draught, in memory of many
A joyous banquet past.”

The revels of merry England are fast subsiding into silence, and her many customs wearing gradually away. The affectations and frivolities of society, as well as its more grave and solemn pursuits,—the exigencies of fashion, and the tongue of the pedagogue,—are alike arrayed against them ; and one by one, they are retreating from the great assemblies where mankind “ most do congregate,” to hide themselves in remote solitudes and rural nooks. In fact, that social change which has enlarged and

filled the towns, at the expense of the country,—which has annihilated the yeomanry of England, and drawn the estated gentleman from the shelter of his ancestral oaks, to live upon their produce, in the haunts of dissipation,—has been, in itself, the circumstance most unfavorable to the existence of many of them, which delight in bye-ways and sheltered places,—which had their appropriate homes in the old manor house, or the baronial hall. Yet do they pass lingeringly away. Traces of most of them still exist, and from time to time re-appear, even in our cities and towns ; and there are probably scarcely any which have not found some remote district or other, of these islands, in which their influence is still acknowledged, and their rites are duly performed. There is something in the mind of man which attaches him to ancient superstitions, even for the sake of their antiquity,—and endears to him old traditions, even because they are old. We cannot readily shake off our reverence for that which our fathers have revered so long, even where the causes in which that reverence originated are not very obvious or not very satisfactory. We believe that he who shall aid in preserving the records of these vanishing observances, ere it be too late, will do good and acceptable service, in his generation : and such contribution to that end as we have in our power, it is the purpose of these volumes to bestow. Of that taste for hunting out the obsolete, which originates in the mere dry spirit of antiquarianism, or is pursued as a display of gladiatorial skill in the use of the intellectual weapons, we profess ourselves no admirers. But he who pursues in the track of a receding custom, which is valuable, either as an historical illustration, or because of its intrinsic beauty, moral or picturesque, is an antiquarian of the beneficent kind ; and he who assists in restoring observances which had a direct tendency to propagate a feeling of brotherhood and a spirit of benevolence, is a higher benefactor still. Right joyous festivals there have been amongst us, which England will be none the merrier—and kindly ones which she will be none the better—for losing. The following pages will give some account of that season, which has, at all times, since the establishment of Christianity, been most crowded with observances ; and whose celebration is, still, the most conspicuous and universal with us, as well as throughout the whole of Christendom.

THE CHRISTMAS SEASON.



“ This book of Christmas is a sound and good persuasion for gentlemen, and all wealthy men to keep a good Christmas.”

A HA ! CHRISTMAS ! BY T. H. LONDON. 1647.

“ Any man or woman * * * that can give any knowledge, or tell any tidings, of an old, old, very old grey-bearded gentleman, called Christmas, who was wont to be a verie familiar ghest, and visite all sorts of people, both pore and rich, and used to appeare in glittering gold, silk, and silver, in the Court, and in all shapes in the Theater in Whitehall, and had ringing, feasts, and jollitie in all places, both in the citie and countrie, for his comming: * * * whosoever can tel what is become of him, or where he may be found, let them bring him back againe into England.”

AN HUE AND CRY AFTER CHRISTMAS.

IN Ben Jonson's "Mask of Christmas," presented before the court in 1616,—wherein the ancient gentleman, so earnestly inquired after in one of the quotations which heads this chapter, and a number of his children, compose the *dramatis personæ*—that venerable personage (who describes himself as "Christmas, Old Christmas, Christmas of London, and Captain Christmas") is made to give a very significant hint to some parties, who fail to receive him with due ceremony: which hint we will, in all courtesy, bestow upon our readers.—“ I have seen the time you have wished for me,” says he,.... “ and now you have me, they would not let me in. I must come another time!—a good jest! *as if I could come more than once a year!*” Over and over again, too, has this same very pregnant argument been enforced in the words of the old ballad, quoted in the “ Vindication of Christmas,”—

“ Let's dance and sing, and make good cheer,
For *Christmas comes but once a year!*”—

Now if this suggestion was full of grave meaning, in the days of Jonson,—when the respectable old man was, for the most part, well received and liberally feasted,—when he fed, with his laughing children, at the tables of princes, and took tribute at the hands of kings,—when he showed, beneath the snows of his reverend head, a portly countenance (the result of much revelling), an eye in which the fire was unquenched, and a frame from which little of the lustihood had yet departed,—we confess that we feel its import to be greatly heightened in these our days, when the patriarch himself exhibits undeniable signs of a failing nature, and many of his once rosy sons are evidently in the different stages of a common decline. A fine and a cheerful family the old man had: and never came they within any man's door, without well repaying the outlay incurred on their account. To us, at all times, their "coming was a gladness;"—and we feel that we could not, without a pang, see their honest and familiar faces rejected from our threshold, with the knowledge that the course of their wanderings could not return them to us under a period so protracted as that of twelve whole months.

In that long space of time, besides the uncertainty of what may happen to ourselves, there is but too much reason to fear, that, unless a change for the better should take place, some one or more of the neglected children may be dead. We could not but have apprehensions that the group might never return to us entire. Death has already made much havoc amongst them, since the days of Ben Jonson. Alas, for Baby cocke! and wo is me for Post-and-paire! And, although Carol, and Minced-pie, and New-year's Gift, and Wassail, and Twelfth-cake, and some others of the children, appear still to be in the enjoyment of a tolerably vigorous health, yet we are not a little anxious about Snap-dragon, and our mind is far from being easy on the subject of Hot-cockles. It is but too obvious that, one by one, this once numerous and pleasant family are falling away; and, as the old man will assuredly not survive his children, we may yet, in our day, have to join in the heavy lamentation of the lady, at the sad result of the above "Hue and Cry."—"But is old, old, good old Christmas gone?—nothing but the hair of his good, grave old head and beard left!"—For these reasons, he and his train shall be wel-

come to us, as often as they come. It shall be a heavy dispensation under which we will suffer them to pass by our door, unhailed : and if we can prevail upon our neighbors to adopt our example, the veteran and his offspring may yet be restored. They are dying for lack of nourishment. They have been used to live on most bountiful fare,—to feed on chins and turkeys, and drink of the wassail-bowl. The rich juices of their constitution are not to be maintained—far less re-established—at a less generous rate ; and though we will, for our parts, do what lies in our power, yet it is not within the reach of any private gentleman's exertions or finances, to set them on their legs again. It should be made a national matter of ; and as the old gentleman, with his family, will be coming our way, soon after the publication of the present volume, we trust we may be the means of inducing some to receive them with the ancient welcome, and feast them after the ancient fashion.

To enable our readers to do this with due effect, we will endeavor to furnish them with a programme of some of the more important ceremonies observed by our hearty ancestors on the occasion ; and to give them some explanation of those observances which linger still,—although the causes in which their institution originated are becoming gradually obliterated, and although they themselves are falling into a neglect, which augurs too plainly of their final and speedy extinction.

It is, alas ! but too true that the spirit of hearty festivity in which our ancestors met this season, has been long on the decline ; and much of the joyous pomp with which it was once received, has, long since, passed away. Those “ divers plente of plesaunces,” in which the genius of mirth exhibited himself,—

“ About zule, when the wind blew cule,
And the round tables began,”

have sent forward to these dull times of ours but few, and those sadly degenerated, representatives. The wild barbaric splendor, the unbridled “ mirth and princely cheare”—with which, upon the faith of ancient ballads, we learn that “ ages long ago,” King Arthur kept Christmas “ in merry Carleile,” with Queen Guenever “ that bride soe bright of blee”—the wholesale hospitality,

the royal stores of "pigs' heads and gammons of bacon," for a Christmas largesse to the poor, at which we get glimpses, in the existing records of the not over-hospitable reign of King John,—the profuse expenditure and stately ceremonial by which the season was illustrated in the reign of the vain and selfish Elizabeth—and the lordly wassailings and antic mummings, whose universal prevalence, at this period of the year, furnished subjects of such holy horror to the puritans, in the time of the first Charles,—have gradually disappeared, before the philosophic pretensions and chilling pedantry of these sage and self-seeking days. The picturesque effects of society—its strong lights and deep shadows—are rapidly passing away ; as the inequalities of surface from which they were projected, are smoothed and polished down. From a period of high ceremonial and public celebration, which it long continued to be in England, the Christmas-tide has tamed away into a period of domestic union and social festivity ;—and the ancient observances which covered it all over with sparkling points, are now rather perceived—faintly, and distantly, and imperfectly,—by the light of the still surviving spirit of the season, than contribute anything to that spirit, or throw, as of old, any light over that season, from themselves.

Of the various causes which contribute to the mingled festival of the Christmas-tide, there are some which have their origin in feelings, and are the remains of observances, that existed previously to that event from which the season, now, derives its name. After the establishment of Christianity, its earliest teachers, feeling the impossibility of replacing, at once, those pagan commemorations which had taken long and deep root in the constitution of society, and become identified with the feelings of nations,—endeavored rather to purify them from their uncleanness, and adapt them to the uses of the new religion. By this arrangement, many an object of pagan veneration became an object of veneration to the early Christians ; and the polytheism of papal Rome (promoted in part by this very compromise, working in the stronghold of the ancient superstition) became engrafted upon the polytheism of the heathens. At a later period, too, the Protestant reformers of that corrupted worship found themselves, from a similar impossibility, under a similar necessity of retaining a

variety of Catholic observances :—and thus it is that festival customs still exist amongst us, which are the direct descendants of customs connected with the classic or druidical superstitions,—and sports which may be traced to the celebrations observed, of old, in honor of Saturn, or of Bacchus.

Amongst those celebrations which have, thus, survived the decay of the religions with which they were connected, by being made subservient to the new faith, or purified forms, which replaced them, that which takes place at the period of the new year—placed as that epoch is in the neighborhood of the winter solstice—stands conspicuous. Bequeathed, as this ancient commemoration has been (with many of its forms of rejoicing), by the pagan to the Christian world,—it has been, by the latter, thrown into close association with their own festival observances in honor of the first great event in the history of their revelation ; and, while the old observances, and the feelings in which they originated, have thus been preserved to swell the tide of Christian triumph,—their pedigree has been overlooked, amid the far higher interest of the observances by whose side they stand, and their ancient titles merged in that of the high family into which they have been adopted.

In most nations, of ancient or modern times, the period of what is popularly called the winter solstice appears to have been recognized as a season of rejoicing. The deepening gloom and increasing sterility which have followed the downward progress of the sun's place in heaven, would generally dispose the minds of men to congratulation at the arrival of that period when, as experience had taught them, he had reached his lowest point of influence with reference to *them* ; and the prospects of renewed light, and warmth, and vegetation, offered by what was considered as his returning march, would naturally be hailed by the signs of thanksgiving, and the voice of mirth. The Roman Saturnalia, which fell at this period, were, accordingly, a season of high festivity,—honored by many privileges and many exemptions from ill. The spirit of universal mirth and unbounded licence was abroad, and had a free charter. Friends feasted together, and the quarrels of foes were suspended. No war was declared, and no capital executions were permitted to take place, during this

season of general good-will ; and the very slave, beneath its genial influence, regained for a moment the moral attitude of a man, and had a right to use the tongue which God had given him, for its original purpose of expressing his thoughts. Not only in the spirit of the time, but in many of the forms which it took, may a resemblance be traced to the Christmas rejoicings of later days. The hymns in honor of Saturn were the Roman representatives of the modern carol ; and presents passed from friend to friend, as Christmas-gifts do in our day. (It may be observed here, that the interchange of gifts, and the offering of donations to the poor, appear to have been, at all periods of rejoicing or delivery, from the earliest times, one of the modes by which the heart manifested its thankfulness ; and our readers may be referred for a single example, where examples abound, to the directions recorded in the Book of Esther, as given by Mordecai, to the Jews in Shushan, for celebrating their escape from the conspiracy of Haman :—that on the anniversaries of “ the days wherein the Jews rested from their enemies, and the month which was turned unto them from sorrow to joy, and from mourning into a good day ; they should make them days of feasting and joy, and of sending portions one to another, and gifts to the poor.”) But a more striking resemblance still,—between the forms observed during the days of the Saturnalia, and those by which the Christmas festival was long illustrated,—may be noticed in the ruler, or king, who was appointed, with considerable prerogatives, to preside over the sports of the former. He is the probable ancestor of that high potentate who, under the title of Christmas Prince, Lord of Misrule, or Abbot of Unreason, exercised a similar sway over the Christmas games of more recent times ; and whose last descendant, the Twelfth-night King, still rules, with a diminished glory, over the lingering revelries of a single night.

In the northern nations of ancient Europe, the same period of the year was celebrated by a festival, in honor of the God Thor ; and which, like the Roman Saturnalia, and the festival of our own times, was illustrated by the song, the dance, and the feast,—executed after their barbarous fashion, and mingled with the savage rites of their own religion. The name of this celebration, Yule, Jule, Iul, or Iol, has given rise to many disputes amongst

antiquaries, as to its derivation ;—whose arguments, however, we need not report for the benefit of our readers, till judgment shall have been finally pronounced. When that time shall arrive, we undertake to publish a new edition of the present work, for the purpose of giving our readers an abstract of the pleadings, and acquainting them with the ultimate decision. In the meantime, we will let Sir Walter Scott inform them how—

“ The savage Dane,
At Iol, more deep the mead did drain ;
High on the beach his galleys drew,
And feasted all his pirate-crew ;
Then, in his low and pine-built hall,
Where shields and axes decked the wall,
They gorged upon the half-dressed steer,
Caroused in sea of sable-beer,—
While round, in brutal jest, were thrown,
The half-gnawed rib and marrow-bone ;
Or listened all, in grim delight,
While Scalds yelled out the joys of fight.
Then forth in frenzy would they hie,
While wildly loose their red locks fly,
And, dancing round the blazing pile,
They made such barbarous mirth the while,
As best might to the mind recall
The boisterous joys of Odin’s hall.”

Amongst other traces of the northern observances which have descended to our times, and of which we shall have occasion, hereafter, to speak, the name of the festival itself has come down, and is still retained by our Scottish brethren, as well as in some parts of England.

The Christian festival of the Nativity, with which these ancient celebrations have been incorporated, appears to have been appointed at a very early period after the establishment of the new religion. Its first positive footsteps are met with in the second century, during the reign of the Emperor Concordius ; but the decretal epistles furnish us with traces of it more remote. At whatever period, however, its formal institution is to be placed, there can be no doubt that an event so striking in its manner and so important in itself, would be annually commemorated amongst

Christians, from the days of the first apostles, who survived our Lord's resurrection. As to the actual year of the birth of Christ,—as well as the *period* of the year at which it took place,—great uncertainty seems to exist, and many controversies have been maintained. One of the theories on the subject, held to be amongst the most probable, places that event upwards of five years earlier than the vulgar era; which latter, however,—both as regards the year and *season* of the year,—was a tradition of the primitive church. In the first ages of that church, and up till the Council of Nice, the celebration of the Nativity, and that of the Epiphany, were united on the 25th of December, from a belief that the birth of Christ was simultaneous with the appearance of the star in the east which revealed it to the Gentiles. The time of the year at which the Nativity fell has been placed, by contending opinions, at the period of the Jewish Feast of Tabernacles, at that of the Passover, and again, at that of the Feast of the Expiation, whose date corresponds with the close of our September. Clemens Alexandrinus informs us that it was kept by many Christians in April; and by others in the Egyptian month Pachon—which answers to our May. Amongst the arguments which have been produced against the theory that places its occurrence in the depth of winter, one has been gathered from that passage in the sacred history of the event which states that “there were shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flocks by night.” It is an argument, however, which does not seem very conclusive in a pastoral country, and eastern climate. Besides the employment which this question has afforded to the learned, it has, in times of religious excitement, been debated with much puritanical virulence and sectarian rancor. For the purposes of commemoration, however, it is unimportant whether the celebration shall fall, or not, at the precise anniversary period of the event commemorated; and the arrangement which assigns to it its place in our calendar, fixes it at a season when men have leisure for a lengthened festivity, and when their minds are otherwise wholesomely acted upon by many touching thoughts and solemn considerations.

From the first introduction of Christianity into these islands, the period of the Nativity seems to have been kept as a season of festival, and its observance recognized as a matter of state.

The Wittenagemots of our Saxon ancestors were held, under the solemn sanctions and beneficent influences of the time ; and the series of high festivities established by the Anglo-Saxon kings appear to have been continued, with yearly increasing splendor and multiplied ceremonies, under the monarchs of the Norman race. From the court, the spirit of revelry descended, by all its thousand arteries, throughout the universal frame of society,—visiting its furthest extremities and most obscure recesses, and everywhere exhibiting its action, as by so many pulses, upon the traditions, and superstitions, and customs which were common to all, or peculiar to each. The pomp and ceremonial of the royal observance were imitated in the splendid establishments of the more wealthy nobles ; and more faintly reflected from the diminished state of the petty baron. The revelries of the old baronial castle found echoes in the hall of the old manor-house,—and these were, again, repeated in the tapestried chamber of the country magistrate, or from the sanded parlor of the village inn. Merriment was, everywhere, a matter of public concernment ; and the spirit which assembles men in families now, congregated them by districts then.

Neither, however, were the feelings wanting which connected the superstitions of the season with the tutelage of the roof-tree, and mingled its ceremonies with the sanctities of home. Men might meet in crowds to feast beneath the banner of the baron—but the misletoe hung over each man's own door. The black jacks might go round in the hall of the lord of the manor,—but they who could, had a wassail-bowl of their own. The pageant-ries and high observances of the time might draw men to common centres, or be performed on a common account,—but the flame of the Yule-log roared up all the individual chimneys of the land. Old father Christmas, at the head of his numerous and uproarious family, might ride his goat through the streets of the city and the lanes of the village,—but he dismounted to sit, for some few moments, by each man's hearth ; while some one or another of his merry sons would break away, to visit the remote farm-houses, or show their laughing faces at many a poor man's door. For be it observed, this worthy old gentleman and his kind-hearted children were no respecters of persons. Though trained

to courts, they had ever a taste for a country life. Though accustomed, in those days, to the tables of princes, they sat freely down at the poor man's board. Though welcomed by the peer, they showed no signs of superciliousness, when they found themselves cheek-by-jowl with the pauper. Nay, they appear even to have preferred the less exalted society: and to have felt themselves more at ease in the country mansion of the private gentleman than in the halls of kings. Their reception in those high places was accompanied, as royal receptions are apt to be, by a degree of state repugnant to their frank natures; and they seem never to have been so happy as when they found themselves amongst a set of free and easy spirits, whether in town or country,—unrestricted by the punctilios of etiquette,—who had the privilege of laughing just when it struck them to do so, without inquiring wherefore, or caring how loud.

Then, what a festival they created! The land rang with their joyous voices; and the frosty air steamed with the incense of the good things provided for their entertainment. Everybody kept holiday but the cooks; and all sounds known to the human ear seemed mingled in the merry pæan, save the gobble of the turkeys. *There were no Turkeys*—at least they had lost their “most sweet voices.” The turnspits had a hard time of it, too. That quaint little book which bears the warm and promising title of “Round About our Coal Fire,” tells us that “by the time dinner was over, they would look as black and as greasy as a Welch porridge-pot.” Indeed the accounts of that time dwell, with great and savory emphasis, upon the prominent share which eating and drinking had in the festivities of the season. There must have been sad havoc made amongst the live-stock. That there are turkeys at all, in our days, is only to be accounted for upon the supposition of England having been occasionally replenished with that article from the East; and our present possession of geese must be explained by the well-known impossibility of extinguishing the race of the goose. It is difficult to imagine a consumption equal to the recorded provision. Men's gastronomic capacities appear to have been enlarged for the occasion,—as the energies expand to meet great emergencies. “The tables,” says the same racy authority above quoted, “were all spread from the first to the

last ; the sirloyns of beef, the minc'd pies, the plumb-porridge, the capons, turkeys, geese, and plumb-puddings, were all brought upon the board ; and all those who had sharp stomachs and sharp knives, eat heartily and were welcome, which gave rise to the proverb,

‘ Merry in the hall, when beards wag all.’ ”

Now, *all* men, in those days, appear to have had good stomachs ; and, we presume, took care to provide themselves with sharp knives.—The only recorded instance in which we find a failure of the latter, is that portentous one which occurred, many a long day since, in the court of King Arthur ; when the Christmas mirth was so strangely disturbed by the mischievous interference of the Boy with the Mantle. Under the test introduced by that imp of discord—and which appears to have “ taken the shine out of ” the monarch’s own good sword Excalibar itself,—there was found but one knight, of all the hungry knights who sat at that Round Table, whose weapon was sharp enough to carve the boar’s head, or hand steady enough to carry the cup to his lip without spilling the lamb’s wool ;—and even he had a very narrow escape from the same incapacities. But then, as we have said, this was at court, and under the influence of a spell (with whose nature we take it for granted that our readers are acquainted,—and if not, we refer them to the Percy Ballads)—and it is probable that in those early, as in later, days, tests of such extreme delicacy were of far more dangerous introduction in the courts of kings than amongst assemblies of more mirth and less pretension. We could by no means feel sure that the intrusion, in our times, of a similar test, into a similar scene, might not spoil the revels.

But to return.—The old ballads which relate to this period of the year, are redolent of good things ; and not to be read by a hungry man with any degree of equanimity. Of course, they are *ex post facto* ballads ; and could only have been written, under the inspiration of memory,—at a time when men were at leisure to devote their hands to some other occupation than those of cooking or carving. But it is very difficult to understand how they ever found,—as it appears they did,—their mouths in a condition to sing them, at the season itself. There is one amongst those ballads,

of a comparatively modern date, printed in Evans's collection, which we advise no man to read, fasting. It is directed to be sung to the tune of "The Delights of the Bottle;" and contains, in every verse, a vision of good things,—summed up by the perpetually recurring burthen of

"Plum-pudding, goose, capon, minc'd pies, and roast beef!"

Our readers had better take a biscuit and a glass of sherry, before they venture upon the glimpses into those regions of banqueting which we are tempted to lay before them. The ballad opens like the ringing of a dinner-bell; and, we conceive, should be sung to some such accompaniment.—

"All you that to feasting and mirth are inclin'd,
Come here is good news for to pleasure your mind,
Old Christmas is come for to keep open house,
He scorns to be guilty of starving a mouse:
Then come, boys, and welcome for diet the chief,
Plum-pudding, goose, capon, minc'd pies, and roast beef."

"Diet *the chief!*"—by which we are to understand that this promising muster-roll merely includes the names of some of the principal viands—the high-commissioned dishes of the feast;—leaving the subalterns, and the entire rank and file which complete the goodly array, unmentioned. It must have been a very ingenious, or a very strong-minded mouse which could contrive to be starved, under such circumstances. The ballad is long; and we can only afford to give our readers "tastings" of its good things. It is everywhere full of most gracious promise.—

"The cooks shall be busied, by day and by night,
In roasting and boiling, for taste and delight,
Their senses in liquor that's nappy they'll steep,
Though they be afforded to have little sleep;
They still are employed for to dress us, in brief,
Plum-pudding, goose, capon, minc'd-pies, and roast-beef.

"Although the cold weather doth hunger provoke,
'Tis a comfort to see how the chimneys do smoke;
Provision is making for beer, ale, and wine,
For all that are willing or ready to dine:
Then haste to the kitchen, for diet the chief,
Plum-pudding, goose, capon, minc'd-pies, and roast-beef.

“ All travellers, as they do pass on their way,
 At gentlemen’s halls are invited to stay,
 Themselves to refresh and their horses to rest,
 Since that he must be old Christmas’s guest ;
 Nay, the poor shall not want, but have for relief,
 Plum-pudding, goose, capon, minc’d-pies, and roast-beef.”

And so on,—through a variety of joyous and substantial anticipations ; from which the writer draws an inference, which we think is most satisfactorily made out :—

“ Then *well may we welcome* old Christmas to town,
 Who brings us good cheer, and good liquor so brown ;
 To pass the cold winter away with delight,
 We feast it all day, and we frolick all night.”

In Ellis’s edition of Brand’s Popular Antiquities, an old Christmas song is quoted from “ Poor Robin’s Almanack,” for 1695,—which gives a similar enumeration of Christmas dainties ; but throws them into a form calculated for more rapid enunciation, as if with due regard to the value of those moments at which it was probably usual to sing it. The measure is not such a mouthful as that of the former one which we have quoted. It comes trippingly off the tongue ; and it is not impossible that, in those days of skilful gastronomy, it might have been sung, eating. We will quote a couple of the verses,—though they include the same commissariat truths as that from which we have already extracted : and our readers will observe, from the ill-omened wish which concludes the second of these stanzas, in what horror the mere idea of *fasting* had come to be held, since it is the heaviest curse which suggested itself to be launched against those who refused to do homage to the spirit of the times.—

“ Now thrice welcome Christmas,
 Which brings us good cheer,
 Minc’d-pies and plumb-porridge,
 Good ale and strong beer ;
 With pig, goose, and capon,
 The best that may be,
 So well doth the weather
 And our stomachs agree.

“Observe how the chimneys
 Do smoak all about,
 The cooks are providing
 For dinner, no doubt ;
 But those on whose tables
 No victuals appear,
O may they keep Lent
All the rest of the year !”

The same author quotes from a manuscript in the British Museum, an Anglo-Norman carol of the early date of the thirteenth century ; and appends to it a translation by the late Mr. Douce, —the following verse of which translation informs us (what, at any rate, might well be supposed, viz.) that so much good eating on the part of the ancient gentleman Christmas, would naturally suggest the propriety of good drinking, too.—

“Lordings, Christmas loves good drinking,
 When of Gascoigne, France, Anjou,
 English ale, that drives out thinking,
 Prince of liquors old or new.
 Every neighbor shares the bowl,
 Drinks of the spicy liquor deep,
 Drinks his fill without control,
 Till he drowns his care in sleep.”

In a “Christmas Carroll,” printed at the end of Wither’s “Juvenilia,” a graphic account is given of some of the humors of Christmas ;—amongst which the labors of the kitchen are introduced in the *first* verse, with a due regard to their right of precedence,—and in words which, if few, are full of suggestion.—

“Lo ! now is come our joyful’st feast !
 Let every man be jolly.
 Each roome with yvie leaves is drest,
 And every post with holly.
 Now, all our neighbors’ chimneys smoke,
 And Christmas Blocks are burning ;
 Their ovens they with bak’t-meats choke,
 And all their spits are turning.”

We must present our readers with another quotation from an old ballad, entitled, “Time’s Alteration ; or, The Old Man’s Rehearsal, what brave dayes he knew a great while agoe, when

his old cap was new,"—and which appears to have been written after the times of the Commonwealth. And this extract we are induced to add to those which have gone before, because, though it deals with precisely the same subjects, it speaks of them as of things gone by,—and is written in a tone of lamentation, in which it is one of the purposes of this chapter to call upon our readers to join. We are sorry we cannot give them directions as to the tune to which it should be sung,—further than that it is obviously unsuited to that of the "Delights of the Bottle," prescribed for the joyous ballad from which we first quoted on this subject; and that, whatever may be the *tune*, we are clear that the direction as to *time* should be the same as that which Mr. Hood prefixes to his song of the Guildhall Giants, viz.,—"Dinner-time and mournful.—"

"A man might, then, behold,
At Christmas, in each hall,
Good fires to curb the cold,
And meat for great and small;
The neighbors were friendly bidden,
And all had welcome true,
The poor from the gates were not chidden,
When this old cap was new.

"Black jacks to every man
Were fill'd with wine and beer;
No pewter pot nor can
In those days did appear:
Good cheer in a nobleman's house
Was counted a seemly show;
We wanted no brawn nor souse,
When this old cap was new."

Can our readers bear, after this sad ditty, to listen to the enumeration of good things described by Whistlecraft to have been served up at King Arthur's table, on Christmas day?—If the list be authentic, there is the less reason to wonder at the feats of courage and strength performed by the Knights of the Round Table.

"They served up salmon, venison, and wild boars,
By hundreds, and by dozens, and by scores.

Hogsheads of honey, kilderkins of mustard,
Muttons, and fatted beeves, and bacon swine ;
Heron and bitterns, peacocks, swan, and bustard,
Teal, mallard, pigeons, widgeons, and in fine,
Plum-puddings, pancakes, apple-pies, and custard.
And therewithal they drank good Gascon wine,
With mead, and ale, and cider of our own ;
For porter, punch, and negus were not known."

But we cannot pursue this matter further. It is not to be treated with any degree of calmness, before dinner,—and we have not dined. We must proceed to less trying parts of our subject.

Of the earnest manner in which our ancestors set about the celebration of this festival, the mock ceremonial with which they illustrated it, the quaint humors which they let loose under its inspiration, and the spirit of fellowship which brought all classes of men within the range of its beneficent provisions, we have a large body of scattered evidence,—to be gleaned out of almost every species of existing record, from the early days of the Norman dynasty, down to the times of the commonwealth. The tales of chroniclers, the olden ballads, the rolls of courts, and the statute-book of the land, all contribute to furnish the materials from which a revival of the old pageantry must be derived, if men should ever again find time to be as merry as their fathers were.

The numberless *local* customs, of which the still remaining tradition is almost the sole record,—and which added each its small contingent to the aggregate of commemoration,—would certainly render it a somewhat difficult matter to restore the festival in its integrity : and, to be very candid with our readers, we believe we may as well confess, at the onset,—what will be very apparent to them before we have done,—that many of the Christmas observances (whether general or local) are to be recommended to their notice rather as curious pictures of ancient manners, than as being at all worthy of imitation by us who "are wiser in our generation." Sooth to say, we dare not let our zeal for our subject lead us into an unqualified approbation of all the doings, which it will be our business to record in these pages ; though they seem to have made all ranks of people very happy, in other days,—and that is no mean test of the value of any institution. Really earnest as we are in the wish that the *sentiment* of the

season could be restored in its amplitude, we fear that many of the fooleries by which it exhibited itself could not be gravely proposed as worthy amusements for a nation of philosophers.

Still these very absurdities furnish the strongest evidences of the right good-will with which men—ay, grave and learned men—surrendered themselves to the merry spirit of the time ;—of that entire abandonment which forgot to make a reservation of their outward dignities, and gave them courage to “play the fool.” Our readers need scarcely be told that it must be a man of a very strong mind (or a man who could not help it), who should dare to make a jack-pudding of himself, in these days,—when all his fellows are walking about the world, with telescopes in their hands and quadrants in their pockets. No doubt it would have a somewhat ridiculous effect to-day, to see the members of the bar dancing a galliard or a coranto, in full costume, before the Benchers,—notwithstanding that certain ancient forms are still retained in their halls, which have all the absurdity of the exploded ones, without any of their fun :—and, unquestionably, we should think it rather strange to see a respectable gentleman capering through the streets on a paste-board hobby-horse (in lieu of the figurative hobby-horses on which most men still exhibit),—although even that we think would offer an object less ungracious than a child, with an anxious brow and “spectacles on nose.” The great wisdom of the world is, we presume, one of the natural consequences of its advancing age :—and though we are quite conscious that some of its former pranks would be very unbecoming, now that it is getting into years, and “knows so much as it does,” yet we are by no means sure that we should not have been well content to have our lot cast in the days when it was somewhat younger. They must have been very pleasant times ! Certain it is that the laugh of the humbler classes, and of the younger classes, would be all the heartier, that it was echoed by the powerful and the aged,—the mirth of the ignorant more free and genial, that the learned thought no scorn of it. For all that appears, too, the dignities of those days suffered no detriment by their surrender to the spirit of the times ; but seem to have resumed all their functions and privileges, when it had exhausted itself, with unimpaired effect. Philosophers had due reverence,

without erecting themselves always on stilts for the purpose of attracting it; and names have come down to us which are esteemed the names of grave, and learned, and wise men,—even in this grave, and learned, and wise age,—who, nevertheless, appear, in their own, to have conducted themselves, at times, very like children.

From the royal Household-Books which exist, and from the Household-Books of noble families (some of which have been printed for better preservation), as also from the other sources to which we have alluded, Mr. Sandys, in the very valuable introduction to his collection of Christmas carols, already mentioned, has brought together a body of valuable information,—both as to the stately ceremonies, and popular observances, by which the season continued to be illustrated, from an early period, up to the time of its decline, amid the austerities of the civil war. To this careful compilation we shall be occasionally indebted, for some curious particulars which had escaped ourselves, amid the multiplied and unconnected sources from which our notes for this volume had to be made. To those who would go deeper into the antiquarian part of the subject than suits the purpose of a popular volume, we can recommend that work,—as containing the most copious and elaborate synopsis of the existing information connected therewith, which we have found in the course of our own researches. It would be impossible, however, in a paper of that length,—or indeed in a volume of any moderate size,—to give an account of all the numerous superstitions and observances of which traces are found, in an extended inquiry, to exist,—throwing light upon each other, and contributing to the complete history of the festival. We have therefore gleaned, from all quarters, those which appear to be the most picturesque, and whose relation is the most obvious,—with a view, as much as possible, of generalizing the subject, and presenting its parts in relation to an intelligible whole.

As we shall have occasion, in our second part, to speak of those *peculiar* feelings and customs by which each of the several days of the Christmas festival is specially illustrated, we shall not at present pause to go into any of the details of the subject,—although continually tempted to do so, by their connexion with the observa-

tions which we are called upon to make. The purpose of the present chapter is rather to insist generally, and by some of its more striking features, upon the high and lengthened festivity with which this portion of the year was so long and so universally welcomed ; and to seek some explanation of the causes to which the diminution of that spirit, and the almost total neglect of its ancient forms, are to be ascribed.

As early as the twelfth century, we have accounts of the spectacles and pageants by which Christmas was welcomed at the court of the then monarch, Henry II.,—and, from this period, the wardrobe rolls, and other Household-Books of the English kings, furnish continual evidences of the costly preparations made for the festival. Many extracts from these books have been made by Mr. Sandys and others ; from which it appears, that the mirth of the celebration, and the lavish profusion expended upon it, were on the increase from year to year,—excepting during that distracted period of England's history when these, like all other gracious arrangements and social relations, were disturbed by the unholy contests between the houses of the rival roses. There is, however, a beautiful example of the sacred influence of this high festival mentioned by Turner, in his *History of England* ; and showing that its hallowed presence had power, even in those warlike days, to silence even the voice of war,—of all war save that most impious of (what are almost always impious) wars, civil war. During the siege of Orleans, in 1428, he says, “the solemnities and festivities of Christmas gave a short interval of repose. The English lords requested of the French commanders, that they might have a night of minstrelsy, with trumpets and clarions. This was granted, and the horrors of war were suspended by melodies, that were felt to be delightful.”

In the peaceful reign of Henry VII., the nation, on emerging from that long and unnatural struggle, appears to have occupied itself,—as did the wise monarch,—in restoring, as far as was possible, and by all means, its disrupted ties, and re-baptizing its apostate feelings ;—and during this period, the festival of Christmas was restored with revived splendor, and observed with renewed zeal. The Household-book of that sovereign, preserved in the chapter-house, at Westminster, contains numerous items

for disbursements connected with the Christmas diversions, in proof of this fact.

The reign of Henry VIII. was a reign of justs and pageants, till it became a reign of blood ; and accordingly the Christmas pageantries prepared for the entertainment of that execrable monarch, were distinguished by increased pomp, and furnished at a more profuse expenditure. The festivities of Eltham and Greenwich figure in the pages of the old chroniclers ; and the account books at the chapter-house abound in payments made in this reign, for purposes connected with the revels of the season.

We shall, by-and-by, have occasion to present our readers with some curious particulars, illustrative of the cost and pains bestowed upon this court celebration, during the short reign of the young monarch Edward VI.

Not all the gloom and terror of the sanguinary Mary's reign, was able entirely to extinguish the spirit of Christmas rejoicing throughout the land,—though the court itself was too much occupied with its *auto-da-fé* spectacles to have much time for pageants of less interest.

Our readers, we think, need scarcely be told that the successor of this stern and miserable queen (and, thank God ! the last of the bad family) was sure to seize upon the old pageantries,—as she did upon every other vehicle which could, in any way, be made to minister to her intolerable vanity, or by which a public exhibition might be made, before the slaves whom she governed, of her own vulgar and brutal mind. Under all the forms of ancient festival observance, some offering was presented to this insatiable and disgusting appetite ;—and that, too, by men entitled to stand erect, by their genius or their virtues, yet whose knees were rough with kneeling before as worthless an idol as any wooden god that the most senseless superstition ever set up, for worship. From all the altars which the court had reared to old Father Christmas, of yore, a cloud of incense was poured into the royal closet, enough to choke anything but a woman—that woman a queen—and that queen a Tudor. The festival was preserved, and even embellished ; but the saint, as far as the court was concerned, was changed. However, the example of the festivity to the people was the same ; and the land was a merry

land,—and the Christmas time a merry time, throughout its length and breadth,—in the days of queen Elizabeth.

Nay, out of this very anxiety to minister to the craving vanity of a weak and worthless woman,—the devices to which it gave rise,—and the laborers whom it called into action,—have arisen results which are not amongst the least happy or important of those, by its connexion with which the Christmas festival stands recommended. Under these impulses, the old dramatic entertainments,—of which we shall have occasion to speak more at large hereafter,—took a higher character and assumed a more consistent form. The first regular English tragedy, called “*Ferrex and Porrex*,” and the entertainment of “*Gammer Gurton’s Needle*,” were both productions of the early period of this queen’s reign:—and amid the crowd of her worshippers (alas! that it is so!) rose up—with the star upon his forehead which is to burn for all time,—the very first of all created beings, William Shakspeare. These are amongst the strange anomalies which the world, as it is constituted, so often presents; and *must* present, at times, constitute it how we will.—Shakspeare doing homage to Queen Elizabeth!—The loftiest genius and the noblest heart that have yet walked this earth, in a character merely human, bowing down before this woman, with the soul of a milliner, and no heart at all!—The “bright particular star” humbling itself before the temporal crown!—The swayer of hearts, the ruler of all men’s minds, in virtue of his own transcendent nature, recognizing the supremacy of this overgrown child, because she presided over the temporalities of a half-emancipated nation, by rights derived to her from others, and sanctioned by no qualities of her own!

And yet, if to the low passions of this vulgar queen, and the patronage which they led her to extend to all who could best minister to their gratification, we owe any part of that development by which this consummate genius expanded itself,—then do we stand, in some degree, indebted to her, for one of the greatest boons which has been bestowed upon the human race; and—as between her and mankind in general (for the accounts between her and individuals,—and still more that between her and God,—stand uninfluenced by this item), there is a large amount of good to be placed to her credit. Against her follies of a day there

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would have to be set her promotion of a wisdom whose lessons are for all time ;—against the tears which she caused to flow, the human anguish which she inflicted, and the weary pining hours of the captives whom she made, would stand the tears of thousands dried away, many and many an aching heart beguiled of its sorrow, and many a captive taught to feel that

“ Stone walls do not a prison make,
Nor iron bars a cage ;”—

all the chords of human feeling touched with a hand that soothes as did the harp of David—all the pages of human suffering stored with consolations !

To any one who will amuse himself by looking over the miracle-plays and masques which were replaced by the more regular forms of dramatic entertainment, and will then regale himself by the perusal of “ Gammer Gurton’s Needle,” or “ Ferrex and Porrex,” which came forward with higher pretensions in the beginning of this reign,—there will appear reason to be sufficiently astonished at the rapid strides by which dramatic excellence was attained before its close, and during the next,—even without taking Shakspeare into the account at all. But when we turn to the marvels of this great magician, and find that, in his hands, not only were the forms of the drama perfected, but that—without impeding the action or impairing the interest invested in those forms, and besides his excursions into the regions of imagination and his creations *out of* the natural world,—he has touched every branch of human knowledge, and struck into every train of human thought,—that, without learning, in the popular sense, he has arrived at all the results, and embodied all the wisdom, which learning is only useful if it teaches,—that we can be placed in no imaginable circumstances, and under the influence of no possible feelings, of which we do not find exponents (and *such* exponents !—“ in sweetest music,”) on his page,—and above all, when we find that all the final morals to be drawn from all his writings are hopeful ones,—that all the lessons which all his agents—joy or sorrow, pain or pleasure,—are made alike to teach, are lessons of goodness,—it is impossible to attribute all this to aught but a revelation, or ascribe to him any character but that

of a prophet. Shakspeare knew more than any other mere man ever knew ; and none can tell how that knowledge came to him. "All men's business and bosoms" lay open to him. We should not like to have him quoted against us, on *any* subject. Nothing escaped him, and he never made a mistake (we are not speaking of technical ones). He was the universal interpreter into language of the human mind ; and he knew all the myriad voices by which nature speaks. He reminds us of the vizier in the eastern story, who is said to have understood the languages of all animals. The utterings of the elements, the voices of beasts and of birds, Shakspeare could translate into the language of men ; and the thoughts and sentiments of men he rendered into words as sweet as the singing of birds. If the reign of Elizabeth had been illustrated only by the advent of this great spirit, it might itself have accounted for some portion of that prejudice which (illustrated as, in fact, it was, by much that was great and noble), blinds men, still,—or induces them to shut their eyes,—to the true personal claims and character of that queen.

But we are digressing, again ;—as who does not, when the image of Shakspeare comes across him ? To return :—

The court celebrations of Christmas were observed throughout the reign of the first James ; and the Prince Charles, himself, was an occasional performer in the pageantries prepared for the occasion, at great cost. But at no period do they appear to have been more zealously sought after, or performed with more splendor, than during that which immediately preceded the persecution, from whose effects they have never since recovered, into anything like their former lustihood. In the early years of Charles the First's reign, the court-pageants of this season were got up with extraordinary brilliancy—the king with the lords of his court, and the queen with her ladies, frequently taking parts therein. This was the case in 1630-1 ; and at the Christmas of 1632-3, the queen, says Sandys, "got up a pastoral in Somerset House, in which it would seem she herself took a part. There were masques at the same time, independently of this performance, the cost of which considerably exceeded £2,000 ; besides that portion of the charge which was borne by the office of the revels, and charged to the accounts of that department." In the same year,

we learn that a grant of £450 was made to George Kirke, Esq., gentleman of the robes, for the *masking attire* of the king and his party. In 1637, there is a warrant under the privy seal to the same George Kirke, for £150, to provide the masking dress of the king ; and, in the same year, another to Edmund Taverner, for £1,400, towards the expenses of a masque to be presented at Whitehall, on the *ensuing Twelfth-Night*. We have selected these from similar examples furnished by Sandys, in order to give our readers some idea of the sums expended in these entertainments ;—which sums will appear very considerable, when estimated by the difference between the value of money in our days and that of two hundred years ago. Several of the masques presented at court during this and the preceding reigns were written by Ben Jonson.

During the whole of this time, the forms of court ceremonial appear to have been aped, and the royal establishments imitated as far as possible, by the more powerful nobles ; and the masques and pageantries exhibited for the royal amusement were accordingly reproduced or rivalled by them, at their princely mansions in the country. Corporate and other public bodies caught the infection all over the land ; and each landed proprietor and country squire endeavored to enact such state in the eyes of his own retainers, as his means would allow. The sports and festivities of the season were everywhere taken under the protection of the lord of the soil ; and all classes of his dependents had a customary claim upon the hospitalities which he prepared for the occasion. The masques of the court and of the nobles were imitated in the mummings of the people,—which we shall have occasion particularly to describe hereafter,—they having survived the costly pageants of which they were the humble representatives. The festival was thus rendered an universal one, and its amusements brought within the reach of the indigent and the remote. The peasant, and even the pauper, were made, as it were, once a year, sharers in the mirth of their immediate lord, and even of the monarch himself. The laboring classes had enlarged privileges, during this season, not only by custom, but by positive enactment ; and restrictive acts of parliament, by which they were prohibited from certain games at other periods, con-

tained exceptions in favor of the Christmas-tide. Nay, folly was, as it were, crowned, and disorder had a licence ! Sandys quotes from Leland the form of a proclamation given in his "Itinerary," as having been made by the sheriff of York ; wherein it is declared that all "thieves, dice-players carders" (with some other characters by name, that are usually repudiated by the guardians of order), "*and all other unthrifty folke*, be welcome to the towne, whether they come late or early, att the reverence of the high feast of Youle, till the twelve dayes be passed." The terms of this proclamation were, no doubt, not intended to be construed in a grave and literal sense ; but were probably meant to convey something like a satire upon the unbounded licence of the season which they thus announce.

There are very pleasant evidences of the care which was formerly taken, in high quarters, that the poor should not be robbed of their share in this festival. The yearly increasing splendor of the royal celebrations appears, at one time, to have threatened that result, by attracting the country gentlemen from their own seats, and thereby withdrawing them from the presidency of those sports which were likely to languish in their absence. Accordingly we find an order, in 1589, issued to the gentlemen of Norfolk and Suffolke, commanding them "to depart from London, before Christmas, and to repair to their countries, there to keep hospitality amongst their neighbors." And similar orders appear to have been, from time to time, necessary, and, from time to time, repeated.

Amongst those bodies who were distinguished for the zeal of their Christmas observances, honorable mention may be made of the two English universities ; and we shall have occasion hereafter to show that traces of the old ceremonials linger still in those, their ancient haunts. But the reader who is unacquainted with this subject, would scarcely be prepared to look for the most conspicuous celebration of these revels, with all their antics and mummeries, in the grave and dusty retreats of the law. Such, however, was the case. The lawyers beat the doctors hollow. Their ancient halls have rung with the sounds of a somewhat barbarous revelry ; and the walls thereof, had they voices, could tell many an old tale, which the present occupants might not con-

sider as throwing any desirable light upon the historical dignities of the body to which they belong. Our readers, no doubt, remember a certain scene in *Guy Mannering*, wherein the farmer Dinmont and Colonel Mannering are, somewhat inconsiderately, intruded upon the carousals of Mr. Counsellor Pleydell, at his tavern in the city of Edinburgh; and find that worthy lawyer in what are called his "altitudes,"—being deeply engaged in the ancient, and not very solemn, pastime of "High Jinks." Their memory may probably present the counsellor, "enthroned as a monarch, in an elbow-chair, placed on the dining-table, his scratch-wig on one side, his head crowned with a bottle-slider, his eye leering with an expression betwixt fun and the effects of wine,"—and recall, assisted by the jingle, some of the high discourse of his surrounding court;—

"Where is Gerunto, now? and what's become of him?"

"Gerunto's drowned, because he could not swim," &c.

Now, if our readers shall be of opinion,—as Colonel Mannering and the farmer were,—that the attitude and the occupation were scarcely consistent with the dignity of a gentleman whom they had come to consult on very grave matters, we may be as much to blame as was the tavern-waiter on that occasion, in introducing them to the revels of the Inns of Court. We will do what we can to soften such censure, by stating that there certainly appears, at times, to have arisen a suspicion, in the minds of a portion of the profession, that the wig and gown were not figuring to the best possible advantage, on these occasions. For, in the reign of the first James, we find an order issued by the benchers of Lincoln's Inn, whereby the "under barristers were, by decimation, put out of commons, because the whole bar offended, by not dancing on Candlemas-day preceding, according to the ancient order of the society, when the judges were present;" and this order is accompanied by a threat, "that if the fault were repeated, they should be fined or disbarred."

There seems to have been a contest between the four Inns of Court as to which should get up these pageantries with the greatest splendor; and occasionally, a struggle between the desire of victory, and the disinclination, or perhaps inability, to furnish the

heavy cost at which that victory was to be secured. Most curious particulars on these subjects are furnished by the account-books of the houses,—by the “*Gesta Grayorum*” (which was published for the purpose of describing a celebrated Christmas kept at Gray’s Inn, in 1594, and had its title imitated from the then popular work called the “*Gesta Romanorum*”),—by Dugdale, in his “*Origines Juridiciales*,”—and by Nichols, in his “*Progresses of Queen Elizabeth*.” For some time, Lincoln’s Inn appears to have carried it all its own way,—having been first on the ground. The Christmas celebrations seem to have been kept by this society from as early a period as the reign of Henry VI. ; although it was not until the reign of Henry VIII. that they began to grow into celebrity,—or, at least, that we have any account of their arrangements. When, however, the societies of the two Temples, and that of Gray’s Inn, began, with a laudable jealousy, to contest the palm of splendor, the necessary expenditure appears, occasionally, to have “given them pause.” Accordingly, they held anxious meetings, at the approach of the season, to decide the important question—whether Christmas should be kept that year or not?—and one of the registers of the society of Lincoln’s Inn, bearing date the 27th of November, in the twenty-second year of Henry VIII.’s reign, contains the following order :—“Yt is agreed, that, if the two Temples do kepe Chrystemas, then Chrystemas to be kept here ; and to know this, the Steward of the House ys commanded to get knowledge, and to advertise my master by the next day at night.”

There is a curious story told in Baker’s Chronicle, of an awkward predicament into which the society of Gray’s Inn brought themselves by a play which they enacted amongst their Christmas revels of 1527. The subject of this play was to the effect that “Lord Governance was ruled by Dissipation and Negligence ; by whose evil order Lady Public-Weal was put from Governance.” Now, if these gentlemen did not intend, by this somewhat delicate moral, any insinuation against the existing state of things (which, being lawyers, and therefore courtiers, there is good motive to believe they did not) it is, at all events, certain that, *as* lawyers, they ought to have known better how to steer clear of all offence to weak consciences. That respectable min-

ister, Cardinal Wolsey, felt himself (as we think he had good right to do) greatly scandalized at what, if not designed, was, by accident, a palpable hint ;—and, in order to teach the gentlemen of Gray's Inn that they were responsible for wounds given, if they happened to shoot arrows in the dark, he divested the ingenious author, Sergeant Roe, of his coif, and committed him to the Fleet, together with one of the actors, of the name of Moyle,—in order to afford them leisure for furnishing him with a satisfactory explanation of the matter.

In Dugdale's "*Origines Juridiciales*," we have an account of a magnificent Christmas which was kept at the Inner Temple, in the fourth year of Queen Elizabeth's reign ;—at which the Lord Robert Dudley, afterwards Earl of Leicester, presided, under the mock-title of Palaphilos, Prince of Sophie, High Constable Marshal of the Knights Templars, and Patron of the honorable order of Pegasus. A potentate with such a title would have looked very foolish without a "tail ;"—and accordingly, he had for his master of the game, no less a lawyer than Christopher Hatton, afterwards Lord Chancellor of England, with four masters of the revels, a variety of other officers, and fourscore persons forming a guard. Gerard Leigh, who was so fortunate as to obtain the dignity of a knight of Pegasus, describes, as an eye-witness, in his "*Accidence of Armorie*," the solemn fooleries which were enacted on the occasion, by these worthies of the sword and of the gown.

Of course, it was not to be expected that such shrewd courtiers as lawyers commonly are, if they had ever kept Christmas at all, should fail to do so, during the reign of this virgin queen,—when its celebration offered them such admirable opportunities for the administration of that flattery which was so agreeable to her majesty, and might, possibly, be so profitable to themselves. We have great pleasure in recording a speech made by her majesty, on one of these occasions, nearly so much as two centuries and a half ago, but which, for its great excellence, has come down to our days. The gentlemen of Gray's Inn (their wits, probably, a little sharpened by the mistake which they had made in her father's time) had ventured upon a dramatic performance again ; and, in the course of a masque which they represented before the

queen's majesty, had administered to her copious draughts of that nectar on which her majesty's vanity was known to thrive so marvellously. They appear, however, with a very nice tact, to have given no more of it on this occasion, than was sufficient to put her majesty into spirits, without intoxicating her;—for by this period of her life, it took a great deal of that sort of thing to intoxicate the queen's majesty; and the effect was of the pleasantest kind, and could not fail to be most satisfactory to the gentlemen of Gray's Inn. For, after the masque was finished (in which we presume there had been a little dancing, by the lawyers—who would, as in duty bound, have stood on their wigs to please her majesty), and on the courtiers attempting, in *their* turn, to execute a dance, her majesty was most graciously pleased to exclaim, “What! shall we have bread and cheese after a banquet?”—meaning thereby, we presume, to imply that the courtiers could not hope to leap as high, or, in any respect, to cut such capers, as the lawyers had done. Now, this speech of the virgin queen we have reported here, less for the sake of any intrinsic greatness in the thought, or elegance in the form, than because, out of a variety of speeches by her majesty, which have been carefully preserved, we think this is about as good as any other; and has the additional recommendation (which so few of the others have) of exhibiting the virgin queen in a good humor. And further, because, having recorded the disgrace into which the gentlemen of Gray's Inn danced themselves, in the lifetime of her illustrious father,—it is but right that we should, likewise, record the ample indemnification which they must have considered themselves to have received, at the lips of his virgin daughter.

The celebrations at the inns of court were, from time to time, continued—down to the period of the civil troubles which darkened the reign of Charles I.; and so lately as the year 1641, when they had already commenced, we find it recorded by Evelyn, in his *Memoirs*, that he was elected one of the controllers of the Middle Temple revellers, “as the fashion of the young students and gentlemen was, the Christmas being kept this yeare with greate solemnity.” During this reign, we discover the several societies lessening their expenses by a very

wise compromise of their disputes for supremacy :—for in the eighth year thereof, the four Inns of Court provided a Christmas masque in conjunction, for the entertainment of the court, which cost the startling sum of £24,000, of the money of that day ; and in return, King Charles invited one hundred and twenty gentlemen of the four Inns to a masque at Whitehall, on the Shrove Tuesday following.

That our readers may form some idea of the kind of sports which furnished entertainment to men of no less pretension than Hatton, and Coke, and Crewe, we will extract for them a few more of the ceremonies usually observed at the grand Christmases of the Inner Temple,—before quitting this part of the subject.

In the first place, it appears that on Christmas-Eve there was a banquet in the hall, at which three masters of the revels were present ; the oldest of whom, after dinner and supper, was to sing a carol, and to command other gentlemen to sing with him ;—and in all this we see nothing which is not perfectly worthy of all imitation now. Then on each of the twelve nights, before and after supper, were revels and dancing ;—and if any of these revels and dancing were performed in company with the fair sex (which, on the face of the evidence, doth not appear), then we have none of the objections to urge against them which we have ventured to insinuate against the solemn buffooneries, to which the bar was fined for refusing to surrender itself, in the time of James I. Neither do we find anything repugnant to our modern tastes, in the announcement that the breakfasts of the following mornings were very substantial ones, consisting of brawn, mustard, malinsey,—which the exhaustion of the previous night's dancing might render necessary ; nor that all the courses were served with music—which we intend that some of our own shall be, this coming Christmas. But against most of that which follows we enter our decided protest,—as not only very absurd in itself, but eminently calculated to spoil a good dinner.

On St. Stephen's day, we learn that, after the first course was served in, the constable marshal was wont to enter the hall (and we think he had much better have come in, and said all he had to say beforehand), bravely arrayed, with “a fair rich compleat

harneys, white and bright and gilt, with a nest of fethers, of all colors, upon his crest or helm, and a gilt pole ax in his hand,"—and, no doubt, thinking himself a prodigiously fine fellow. He was accompanied by the lieutenant of the Tower, "armed with a fair white armour," also wearing "fethers," and "with a like pole ax in his hand,"—and of course also thinking himself a very fine fellow. With them came sixteen trumpeters, preceded by four drums and fifes, and attended by four men clad in white "harneys," from the middle upwards, having halberds in their hands, and bearing on their shoulders a model of the tower,—and each and every one of these latter personages, in his degree, having a consciousness that he, too, was a fine fellow. Then, all these fine fellows, with the drums and music, and with all their "fethers" and finery, went, three times, round the fire,—whereas considering that the boar's head was cooling all the time, we think once might have sufficed. Then the constable marshal, after three curtesies, knelt down before the lord chancellor, with the lieutenant doing the same behind him, and then and there deliberately proceeded to deliver himself of an "oration of a quarter of an hour's length," the purport of which was to tender his services to the lord chancellor;—which we think, at such a time, he might have contrived to do in fewer words. To this the chancellor was unwise enough to reply that he would "take further advice therein;"—when it would have been much better for him to settle the matter at once, and proceed to eat his dinner. However, this part of the ceremony ended, at last, by the constable marshal and the lieutenant obtaining seats at the chancellor's table, upon the former giving up his sword;—and then enter, for a similar purpose, the master of the game, apparelled in green velvet, and the ranger of the forest, in a green suit of "satten," bearing in his hand a green bow, and "divers" arrows, "with either of them a hunting-horn about their necks, blowing together three blasts of venery." These worthies, also, thought it necessary to parade their finery three times round the fire; and having then made similar obeisances, and offered up a similar petition, in a similar posture, they were finally inducted into a similar privilege.

But though seated at the chancellor's table, and no doubt sufficiently aroused by the steam of its good things, they were far

enough, as yet, from getting anything to eat, as a consequence :—and the next ceremony is one which strikingly marks the rudeness of the times. “A huntsman cometh into the hall, with a fox, and a purse net with a cat, both bound at the end of a staff, and with them nine or ten couple of hounds, with the blowing of hunting-horns. And the fox and the cat are set upon by the hounds, and killed beneath the fire.” “What this ‘merry disport’ signified (if practised) before the Reformation,” says a writer in Mr. Hone’s Year-Book, “I know not. In ‘Ane compendious booke of godly and spiritual songs, Edinburgh, 1621, printed from an old copy,’ are the following lines, seemingly referring to some such pageant :—

‘The hunter is Christ that hunts in haist,
The hunds are Peter and Pawle,
The paip is the fox, Rome is the Rox
That rubbis us on the gall.’”

After these ceremonies, the welcome permission to betake themselves to the far more interesting one of an attack upon the good things of the feast, appears to have been, at length, given ; but at the close of the second course, the subject of receiving the officers who had tendered their Christmas service, was renewed. Whether the gentlemen of the law were burlesquing their own profession, intentionally, or whether it was only an awkward *hit*, like that which befell their brethren of Gray’s Inn, does not appear. However, the common serjeant made what is called “a plausible speech ;” insisting on the necessity of these officers, “for the better reputation of the Commonwealth :” and he was followed, to the same effect, by the king’s serjeant-at-law ; till the lord chancellor silenced them, by desiring a respite of further advice,—which it is greatly to be marvelled he had not done sooner ;—and thereupon he called upon the “ancientest of the masters of the revels” for a song, a proceeding to which we give our unqualified approbation.

So much for the dinner. After supper, the constable marshal again presented himself, if possible finer than before ; preceded by drums,—as so fine a man ought to be,—and mounted on a scaffold borne by four men. After again going thrice round the

hearth, he dismounted from his elevation, and having set a good example, by first playing the figurant himself, for the edification of the court, called upon the nobles, by their respective Christmas-names, to do the same. Of the styles and titles which it was considered humorous to assume on such occasions, and by which he called up his courtiers to dance, our readers may take the following for specimens :—

“ Sir Francis Flatterer, of Fowlehurst, in the county of Buckingham.”

“ Sir Randle Rackabite, of Rascall Hall, in the county of Rabchell.”

“ Sir Morgan Mumchance, of Much Monkery, in the county of Mad Popery ;”—

And so on, with much more of the same kind, which we are sure our readers will spare us,—or rather thank us for sparing them. The ceremonies of the St. John's day were, if possible, more absurd than those by which St. Stephen was honored : but, that we may take leave of the lawyers, on good terms, and with a word of commendation, we will simply add, that the concluding one is stated to be, that, on the Thursday following, “ the chancellor and company partook of a dinner of roast beef and venison pasties, and at supper of mutton and hens roasted ;” which we take to have been not only the most sensible proceeding of the whole series, but about as sensible a thing as they, or anybody else, could well do.

So important were these Christmas celebrations deemed by our ancestors, and such was the earnestness bestowed upon their preparation, that a special officer was appointed for that purpose, and to preside over the festival, with large privileges, very considerable appointments, and a retinue which in course of time came to be no insignificant imitation of a prince's. We are, of course, speaking at present of the officer who was appointed to the superintendence of the Christmas ceremonials *at court*. The title by which this potentate was usually distinguished in England, was that of “ Lord of Misrule,” “ Abbott of Misrule,” or “ Master of Merry Disports ;” and his office was, in fact, that of a temporary “ Master of the Revels” (which latter title was formerly that of a permanent and distinguished officer attached to the household

of our kings). Accordingly we find that, amongst those of the more powerful nobles who affected an imitation of the royal arrangements in their Christmas establishments, this Christmas officer (when they appointed one to preside over their private Christmas celebrations) was occasionally nominated as *their* "Master of the Revels." In the Household-Book of the Northumberland family, amongst the directions given for the order of the establishment, it is stated that "My lord useth and accustomyth yerly to gyf hym which is ordynede to be the MASTER OF THE REVELLS yerly in my lordis hous in cristmas for the overseyinge and orderinge of his lordschips Playes, Interludes, and Dresinge that is plaid befor his lordship in his hous in the xijth dayes of Cristenmas, and they to have in rewarde for that caus yerly, xxs." In the Inns of Court, where this officer formed no part of a household, but was a member elected out of their own body, for his ingenuity, he was commonly dignified by a title more appropriate to the extensive authority with which he was invested, and the state with which he was furnished for its due maintenance, viz., that of "Christmas prince," or sometimes, "King of Christmas." He is the same officer who was known in Scotland as the "Abbot of Unreason," and bears a close resemblance to the "Abbas Stultorum," who presided over the feast of fools, in France, and the "Abbé de la Malgourverné," who ruled the sports in certain provinces of that kingdom. In a note to Ellis's edition of "Brand's Popular Antiquities," we find a quotation from Mr. Warton (whose "History of English Poetry" we have not at hand), in which mention is made of an "Abbé de Liesse," and a reference given to Carpentier's Supplement to Du Cange, for the title "Abbas Lætitie." We mention these, to enable the antiquarian portion of our readers to make the reference for themselves. Writing in the country, we have not access to the works in question, and could not, in these pages, go further into the matter if we had.

We have already stated, that the "Lord of Misrule" appears to bear a considerable resemblance to that ruler or king who was anciently appointed to preside over the sports of the Roman Saturnalia; and we find on looking further into the subject, that we are corroborated in this view by one who, of course, asserts the resemblance for the purpose of making it a matter of reproach.

The notorious Prynne, in his *Histrio-Mastix*, affirms (and quotes Polydore Virgil to the same effect) that "our Christmas lords of Misrule, together with dancing, masques, mummeries, stage-players, and such other Christmas disorders, now in use with Christians, were derived from these Roman Saturnalia and Bacchanalian festivals;—which," adds he, "should cause all pious Christians eternally to abominate them." We should not, however, omit to mention that by some this officer has been derived from the ancient ceremony of the Boy-Bishop. Faber speaks of him as originating in an old Persico-gothic festival, in honor of Budha; and Purchas, in his *Pilgrimage*, as quoted in the *Aubrey MSS.*, says, that the custom is deduced from the "Feast in Babylon, kept in honor of the goddess Dorcetha, for five dayes together; during which time the masters were under the dominion of their servants, one of which is usually sett over the rest, and royally cloathed, and was called Sogan, that is, Great Prince."

The title, however, by which this officer is most generally known is that of Lord of Misrule. "There was," says Stow, "in the feast of Christmas, in the king's house, wheresoever he was lodged, a Lord of Misrule, or Master of merry Disports; and the like had ye for the house of every nobleman of honor, or good worship, were he spiritual or temporal. Among the which the Mayor of London and either of the Sheriffs had their several Lords of Misrule, ever contending, without quarrel or offence, which should make the rarest pastimes, to delight the beholders."

On the antiquity of this officer in England, we have not been able to find any satisfactory account; but we discover traces of him, almost as early as we have any positive records of the various sports by which the festival of this season was supported. Polydore Virgil speaks of the splendid spectacles, the masques, dancings, &c., by which it was illustrated as far back as the close of the twelfth century; and it is reasonable to suppose that something in the shape of a master of these public ceremonies must have existed then, to preserve order, as well as furnish devices,—particularly as the hints for the one and the other seem to have been taken from the celebrations of the heathens. As early as the year 1489, Leland speaks of an Abbot of Misrule, "that

made much sport, and did right well his office." Henry the Seventh's "boke of paymentis," preserved in the Chapter-house, is stated by Sandys, to contain several items of disbursement to the Lord of Misrule (or Abbot, as he is therein sometimes called), for different years, "in rewarde for his besynes in Christennes holydays," none of which exceeded the sum of £6. 13s. 4d. This sum (multiplied, as we imagine it ought to be, by something like fifteen, to give the value thereof in our days), certainly affords no very liberal remuneration to an officer whose duties were of any extent; and we mention it that our readers may contrast it with the lavish appointments of the same functionary in after times. Henry, however, was a frugal monarch, though it was a part of his policy to promote the amusements of the people; and from the treasures which that frugality created, his immediate successors felt themselves at liberty to assume a greater show. In the subsequent reign, the yearly payments to the Lord of Misrule had already been raised as high as £15. 6s. 8d.; and the entertainments over which he presided were furnished at a proportionably increased cost.

It is not, however, until the reign of the young monarch, Edward the Sixth, that this officer appears to have attained his highest dignities; and during the subsequent reign we find him playing just such a part as might be expected from one whose business it was to take the lead in revels such as we have had occasion to describe,—viz. that of arch-buffoon.

In Hollinshed's Chronicle, honorable mention is made of a certain George Ferrers, therein described as a "lawyer, a poet, and an historian," who supplied the office well, in the fifth year of Edward VI.; and who was rewarded by the young king with princely liberality. This George Ferrers was the principal author of that well-known work, the "Mirror for Magistrates;" and Mr. Kempe, the editor of the recently published "Loseley Manuscripts," mentions his having been likewise distinguished by military services in the reign of Henry VIII. It appears that the young king having fallen into a state of melancholy, after the condemnation of his uncle, the Protector, it was determined to celebrate the approaching Christmas festival with more than usual splendor, for the purpose of diverting his mind; and this

distinguished individual was selected to preside over the arrangements.

The publication of the Loseley Manuscripts enables us to present our readers with some very curious particulars, illustrative at once of the nature of those arrangements, and of the heavy cost at which they were furnished. By an order in council, dated the 31st of September, 1552, and addressed to Sir Thomas Cawarden, at that time master of the King's Revels, after reciting the appointment of the said George Ferrers, the said Sir Thomas is informed that it is his Majesty's pleasure "that you se hym furnished for hym and his bande, as well in apparell as all other necessities, of such stuff as remayneth in your office. And whatsoever wanteth in the same, to take order that it be provided accordingle by yo^r discretion."

For the manner in which the Lord of Misrule availed himself of this unlimited order, we recommend to such of our readers as the subject may interest, a perusal of the various estimates and accounts published by Mr. Kempe, from the MSS. in question. Were it not that they would occupy too much of our space, we should have been glad to introduce some of them here, for the purpose of conveying to the reader a lively notion of the gorgeousness of apparel and appointment exhibited on this occasion. We must, however, present them with some idea of the train for whom these costly preparations are made, and of the kind of mock court with which the Lord of Misrule surrounded himself.

Amongst these we find mention made of a chancellor, treasurer, comptroller, vice chamberlain, lords-councillors, divine, philosopher, astronomer, poet, physician, apothecary, master of requests, civilian, disard (an old word for clown), gentleman-ushers, pages of honor, sergeants-at-arms, provost-marshal, footmen, messengers, trumpeter, herald, orator; besides hunters, jugglers, tumblers, band, fools, friars (a curious juxtaposition, which Mr. Kempe thinks might intend a satire), and a variety of others. None seem, in fact, to have been omitted who were usually included in the retinue of a prince; and over this mock court the mock monarch appears to have presided with a sway as absolute, as far as regarded the purposes of his appointment, as the actual

monarch himself over the weightier matters of the state. But the most curious part of the arrangements is, that by which (as appears from one of the lists printed from one of these MSS), he seems to have been accompanied in his procession by an heir-at-law, and three other children, besides two *base sons*. These two base sons, we presume, are bastards; and that the establishment of a potentate could not be considered complete without them. The editor also mentions that he was attended by an almoner, who scattered amongst the crowd, during his progresses, certain coins made by the wire-drawers; and remarks that, if these bore the portrait and superscription of the Lord of Misrule, they would be rare pieces in the eye of a numismatist.

The following very curious letter, which we will give entire, will furnish our readers with a lively picture of the pageantries of that time, and of the zeal with which full-grown men set about amusements of a kind which are now usually left to children of a smaller growth. Playing at kings is, in our day, one of the sports of most juvenile actors. The letter is addressed by Master George Ferrers to Sir Thomas Cawarden; and gives some account of his intended entry at the court at Christmas, and of his devices for furnishing entertainment during the festival.

“SIR,

“Whereas you required me to write, for that y^r busynes is great, I have in as few wordes as I maie signefied to you such things as I thinke moste necessarie for my purpose.

“first, as towching my Introduction. Whereas the laste yeare my devise was to cum of oute of the mone (moon), this yeare I imagine to cum oute of a place called *vastum vacuum*, the great waste, as moche to saie as a place voide or emptie wthout the worlde, where is neither fier, ayre, nor earth; and that I have bene remayning there sins the last yeare. And, because of certaine devises which I have towching this matter, I wold, yf it were possyble, have all myne apparell blewe, the first daie that I p^rsent my self to the King’s Ma^{tie}; and even as I shewe my self that daie, so my mynd is in like order and in like suets (suits) to shew myself at my comyng into London after the halowed daies.

“Againe, how I shall cum into the Courte, whether under a

canopie, as the last yeare, or in a chare triumphall, or uppon some straunge beaste—that I reserve to you ; but the serpente with sevin heddes, cauled hidra, is the chief beast of myne armes, and wholme* (holm) bushe is the devise of my crest, my wordet† is *semper ferians*, I alwaies feasting or keeping holie daies. Uppon Christmas daie I send a solempne ambassad^e to the King's Ma^{ie} by an herrald, a trumpet, an orator speaking in a straunge language, an interpreter, or a truchman with hym, to which p'sons ther were requisit to have convenient farnytur, which I referre to you.

“ I have provided one to plaie uppon a kettell drom with his boye, and a nother drome wth a fyffe, whiche must be apparelled like turkes garments, according to the paternes I send you herewith. On St. Stephen's daie, I wold, if it were possyble, be with the King's Ma^{ie} before dynner. Mr. Windham, being my Admirall, is appointed to receive me beneth the bridge with the King's Brigandyne, and other vessells apointed for the same purpose ; his desire is to have the poope of his vessell covered wth white and blew, like as I signifie to you by a nother l^{er}.

“ Sir George Howard, being my M^r. of the Horsis, receiveth me at my landing at Greenwiche with a spare horse and my pages of hono^r, one carieng my hed pece, a nother my shelde, the thirde my sword, the fourth my axe. As for their furniture I know nothing as yet provided, either for my pages or otherwise, save a hed peece that I caused to be made. My counsailo^rs, with suche other necessarie psons y^t attend upon me that daie, also must be consydered. There maie be no fewer than sixe counsailo^rs at the least ; I must also have a divine, a philosopher, an astronomer, a poet, a physician, a potecarie, a m^r of requests, a sivilian, a disard, John Smyth, two gentlemen ushers, besides jugglers, tomblers, fooles, friers, and suche other.

“ The residue of the wholie daies I will spend in other devises : as one daie in feats of armes, and then wolde I have a challeng pformed with hobbie horsis, where I purpose to be in pson. Another daie in hunting and hawking, the residue of the tyme shalbe

* The evergreen holly is meant, a bearing peculiarly appropriate to the lord of Christmas sports.

† His motto, or impress.

spent in other devisis, which I will declare to you by mouth to have yo^r ayde and advice therein.

“S^r, I know not howe ye be provided to furnish me, but suer methinks I shold have no lesse than five suets of apparell, the first for the daie I come in, which shall also serve me in London, and two other suets for the two halowed daies folowing, the fourth for newe yeares daie, and the fife for XIIth daie.

“Touching my suet of blew, I have sent you a pece of velvet which with a kinde of powdered ermaines in it, verrie fytt for my wering, yf you so thynke good. All other matters I referre tyll I shall speake with you.

“GEORGE FERRERS.”

In other letters from this Lord of Misrule to the Master of the Revels, he applies for eight visers for a drunken masque, and eight swords and daggers for the same purpose; twelve hobby-horses, two Dryads, and Irish dresses for a man and woman; and seventy jerkins of buckram, or canvas painted like mail, for seventy “hakbuturs,” or musketeers of his guard.

Such are some of the testimonies borne by the parties themselves to their own right pleasant follies, and the expense at which they maintained them; and to these we will add another, coming from an adverse quarter, and showing the light in which these costly levities had already come to be regarded by men of sterner minds, so early as the reign of Elizabeth. The following very curious passage is part of an extract made by Brand, from a most rare book entitled, “The Anatomie of Abuses,”—the work of one Phillip Stubbs, published in London, in 1585; and gives a quaint picture of the Lord of Misrule, and his retainers, as viewed through Puritan optics.

“Firste,” says Master Stubbs, “all the wilde heades of the parishe, conventynge together, chuse them a grand Capitaine (of mischeef) whom they ennoble with the title of my *Lord of Misse-rule*, and hym they crown with great solemnitie, and adopt for their kyng. This kyng anoynted, chuseth for the twentie, fourtie, three score, or a hundred lustie guttes like to himself, to waite uppon his lordely majestie, and to garde his noble personé. Then every one of these his menne he investeth with his liveries, of

greene, yellowe, or some other light wanton color. And as though that were not baudie (gaudy) enough I should saie, they bedecke themselves with scarffes, ribons, and laces, hanged all over with gold rynges, precious stones, and other jewelles: this doen, they tye about either legge twenty or fourtie belles with rich handkercheefes, in their handes, and sometymes laied acrossse over their shoulders and neckes, borrowed for the moste parte of their pretie Mopsies and looving Bessies for bussying them in the darcke. Thus thinges sette in order, they have their hobbie horses, dragons, and other antiques, together with their baudie pipers, and thunderyng drommers, to strike up the Deville's Daunce withall" (meaning the Morris Dance), "then marche these heathen companie towards the church and churche yarde, their pipers pipyng, drommers thonderyng, their stumpes dauncyng, their bells iynglyng, their handkercheefes swyngyng about their heades like madmen, their hobbie horses, and other monsters skyrmyshyng amongst the throng: and in this sorte they goe to the churche (though the minister bee at praier or preachyng) dauncyng and swingyng their handkercheefes over their heades, in the churche, like devilles incarnate, with such a confused noise, that no man can heare his owne voice. Then the foolishe people, they looke, they stare, they laugh, they fleere, and mount upon formes and pewes, to see these goodly pageauntes, solemnized in this sort."

At the Christmas celebration held at Gray's Inn, in 1594, to which we have already alluded, the person selected to fill the office of Christmas Prince, was a Norfolk gentleman of the name of Helmes; whose leg, like that of Sir Andrew Ague-Cheek, appears "to have been formed under the star of a galliard." He is described as being "accomplished with all good parts, fit for so great a dignity, and also a very proper man in personage, and very active in dancing and revelling." The revels over which this mock monarch presided, were, as our readers will remember, exhibited before Queen Elizabeth; and it was the exquisite performance of this gentleman and his court which her majesty described as bearing the same relation for excellence to those of her own courtiers, which a banquet does to bread and cheese. We must refer such of our readers as are desirous of informing themselves as to the nature and taste of the devices which could make

her majesty so eloquent, to the “Gesta Grayorum;” contenting ourselves with giving them such notion thereof, as well as of the high dignities which appertained to a Lord of Misrule, as may be conveyed by a perusal of the magnificent style and titles assumed by Mr. Henry Helmes, on his accession. They were enough to have made her majesty jealous, if she had not been so good-natured a queen; for looking at the *philosophy* of the thing, she was about as much a mock monarch as himself, and could not dance so well. To be sure, she was acknowledged by his potentate as Lady Paramount; and to a woman like Elizabeth, it was something to receive personal homage from—

“The High and Mighty Prince, HENRY, Prince of Purpoole: Archduke of Stapulia and Bernardia; Duke of High and Nether Holborn; Marquis of St. Giles and Tottenham; Count Palatine of Bloomsbury and Clerkenwell; Great Lord of the Cantons of Islington, Kentish Town, Paddington, and Knightsbridge; Knight of the most Heroical Order of the Helmet, and Sovereign of the same!!!”

It is admitted that no man can be a great actor who has not the faculty of divesting himself of his personal identity, and persuading himself that he really is, for the time, that which he represents himself to be;—his doing which will go far to persuade others into the same belief. Now as her majesty has pronounced upon the excellency of Mr. Henry Helmes’s acting, and if we are, therefore, to suppose that that gentleman had contrived to mystify both himself and her, she would naturally be not a little vain of so splendid a vassal. But, seriously, it is not a little amusing to notice the good faith with which these gentlemen appear to have put on and worn their burlesque dignities, and the real homage which they not only expected, but actually received. If the tricks which they played during their “brief authority,” were not of that mischievous kind which “make the angels weep,” they were certainly fantastic enough to make those who are “a little lower than the angels” smile. A lord mayor, in his gilt coach, seems to be a trifle compared with the Lord of Misrule entering the city of London in former days:—and the following passage from Warton’s “History of English Poetry,” exhibits amusingly enough the sovereign functions seriously exercised by this in-

portant personage, and the homage, both ludicrous and substantial, which he sometimes received.

“At a Christmas celebrated in the hall of the Middle Temple, in the year 1635, the jurisdiction privileges and parade of this mock monarch are thus circumstantially described. He was attended by his Lord Keeper, Lord Treasurer, with eight white staves, a Captain of his Band of Pensioners, and of his Guard; *and with two Chaplains, who were so seriously impressed with an idea of his regal dignity, that when they preached before him, on the preceding Sunday, in the Temple Church, on ascending the pulpit, they saluted him with three low bows.* He dined both in the Hall, and in his Privy Chamber, under a Cloth of Estate. The pole-axes for his Gentlemen Pensioners were borrowed of Lord Salisbury. Lord Holland, his temporary justice in Eyre, supplies him with venison on demand; and the Lord Mayor and Sheriffs of London with wine. On Twelfth-day, at going to church, he received many petitions, which he gave to his Master of Requests; and, like other kings, he had a favorite, whom, with others, gentlemen of high quality, he knighted at returning from Church.”

The Christmas Prince on this occasion was Mr. Francis Vivian; who expended, from his own private purse, the large sum of 2000*l.*, in support of his dignities. Really, it must have tried the philosophy of these gentlemen to descend from their temporary elevation, into the ranks of ordinary life. A deposed prince like that high and mighty prince, Henry, Prince of Purpoole, must have felt, on getting up, on the morrow of Candlemas-day, some portion of the sensations of Abon Hassan, on the morning which succeeded his Caliphate of a day;—when the disagreeable conviction was forced upon him that he was no longer Commander of the Faithful; and had no further claim to the services of Cluster-of-Pearls, Morning-Star, Coral-Lips, or Fair-Face. In the case, however, of Mr. Francis Vivian, it is stated that, after his deposition, he was knighted by the king—by way, we suppose, of breaking his fall.

In Wood’s “*Athenæ Oxonienses*,” mention is made of a very splendid Christmas ceremonial observed at St. John’s College, Oxford, in the reign of our first James; which was presided over by a Mr. Thomas Tooker, whom we, elsewhere, find called

“Tucker.” From a manuscript account of this exhibition, Wood quotes the titles assumed by this gentleman, in his character of Christmas Prince : and we will repeat them here, for the purpose of showing that the legal cloisters were not the only ones in which mirth was considered as no impeachment of professional gravity—and that humor (such as it is) was an occasional guest of the wisdom which is proverbially said to reside in wigs—of *all* denominations. From a comparison of these titles with those by which Mr. Henry Helmes illustrated his own magnificence at Gray’s Inn, our readers may decide for themselves upon the relative degrees of wit which flourished beneath the shelter of the respective gowns. Though ourselves a Cantab, we have no skill in the measurement of the relations of small quantities. Of the hearty mirth in each case there is little doubt ; and humor of the finest quality could not have done more than produce that effect, and might probably have failed to do so much. The appetite is the main point. “The heart’s all,” as Davy says. A small matter made our ancestors laugh, because they brought stomachs to the feast of Momus. And, Heaven save the mark ! through how many national troubles has that same joyous temperament (which is the farthest thing possible from levity—one of the phases of deep feeling), helped to bring the national mind. The “merry days” of England were succeeded by what may be called her “age of tears,”—the era of the sentimentalists : when young gentlemen ceased to wear cravats, and leaned against pillars, in drawing-rooms, in fits of moody abstraction, or under the influence of evident inspiration ; and young ladies made lachrymatories of their boudoirs, and met together to weep, and in fact, went through the world weeping. Amid all its absurdity there was some real feeling at the bottom of this too, and, therefore it, too, had its pleasure. But there is to be an end of this also. Truly are we fallen upon the “evil days” of which we may say we “have no pleasure in them.” Men are neither to laugh nor smile, now, without distinctly knowing why. We are in the age of the philosophers. All this time, however, Mr. Thomas Tucker is waiting to have his style and titles proclaimed ; and thus do we find them duly set forth :—

“The most magnificent and renowned THOMAS, by the favour

of Fortune, Prince of Alba Fortunata, Lord of St. John's, High Regent of the Hall, Duke of St. Giles's, Marquis of Magdalen's, Landgrave of the Grove, Count Palatine of the Cloysters, Chief Bailiff of Beaumont, High Ruler of Rome, Master of the Manor of Walton, Governor of Gloucester Green, sole Commander of all Titles, Tournaments, and Triumphs, Superintendent in all Solemnities whatever."

From these titles,—as well as from those which we have already mentioned as being assumed by the courtiers of the illustrious Prince of Sophie,—our readers will perceive that alliteration was an esteemed figure in the rhetoric of the revels.

We must not omit to observe that an officer corresponding to the Lord of Misrule, appears to have formerly exercised his functions at some of the colleges at Cambridge, under the more classical title of Imperator. And we must further state, that, at Lincoln's-Inn, in the early times of their Christmas celebrations, there appear to have been elected (besides the Lord of Misrule, and, we presume, in subordination to him), certain dignitaries exercising a royal sway over the revelries of particular days of the festival. In the account given by Dugdale of the Christmas held by this society in the ninth year of Henry VIII.'s reign, mention is made, besides the Marshal and (as he is there called) the Master of the Revels, of a King chosen for Christmas-day,—and an officer for Childermas-day, having the title of King of the Cockneys. A relic of this ancient custom exists in the Twelfth-night King, whom it is still usual to elect on the festival of the Epiphany,—and of whom we shall have occasion to speak at length, in his proper place.

The length of the period, over which the sway of this potentate extended, does not seem to be very accurately defined ;—or rather, it is probable that it varied with circumstances. Strictly speaking, the Christmas season is, in our day, considered to terminate with Twelfth-night ; and the festival itself to extend over that space of time of which this night, on one side, and Christmas-eve on the other, are the limits. In ancient times, too, we find frequent mention of the *twelve* days of Christmas. Thus the George Ferrers of whom we have spoken, is appointed "to be in his hyness household for the twelve days ;" and he dates one of

his communications to Sir Thomas Cawarden, "From Green y^e second of January and y^e ixth day of o^r rule." In the extract from the Household Book of the Northumberland family, which we have already quoted, mention is also made of the "Playes, Interludes, and Dresinge that is plaid befor his lordship in his hous in the xijth dayes of Christenmas." Stow, however, says that "these Lords, beginning their rule at Allhallond Eve, continued the same till the morrow after the Feast of the Purification, commonly called Candlemas Day;" and that, during all that time, there were under their direction "fine and subtle disguisings, masks and mummeries, with playing at cards for counters, nayles, and points in every house, more for pastimes than for gaine." This would give a reign of upwards of three months to these gentlemen. Dugdale, in describing the revels of the Inner Temple, speaks of the three principal days being All-hallows, Candlemas, and Ascension Days—which would extend the period to seven months; and the masque of which we have spoken, as forming the final performance of the celebrated Christmas of 1594, described in the "Gesta Grayorum," is stated to have been represented before the queen at Shrove-tide. At the Christmas exhibition of St. John's college, Oxford, held in 1607, Mr. Thomas Tucker did not resign his office till Shrove-Tuesday; and the costly mask of which we have spoken, as being presented by the four Inns of Court, to Charles I., and whose title was "The Triumph of Peace," was exhibited in the February of 1633. In Scotland, the rule of the Abbot of Unreason appears to have been still less limited, in point of time; and he seems to have held his court, and made his processions, at any period of the year which pleased him. These processions, it appears, were very usual in the month of May (and here we will take occasion to observe, parenthetically, but in connexion with our present subject, that the practice, at *all* festival celebrations, of selecting some individual to enact a principal and presiding character in the ceremonial, is further illustrated by the ancient May King,—and by the practice, not yet wholly forgotten, of crowning, on the first of that month, a Queen of the May. This subject we shall have occasion to treat more fully when we come to

speaking, in some future volume, of the beautiful customs of that out-of-doors season).

From what we have stated, it appears probable, that the officer who was appointed to preside over the revels so universally observed at Christmas time, extended, as a matter of course, his presidency over all those which—either arising out of them, or unconnected therewith,—were performed at more advanced periods of the succeeding year;—that, in fact, the Christmas prince was, without new election, considered as special master of the revels, till the recurrence of the season. It is not necessary for us to suppose that the whole of the intervals lying between such stated and remote days of celebration were filled up with festival observances; or that our ancestors, under any calenture of the spirits, could aim at extending Christmas over the larger portion of the year. It is, however, apparent that, although the common observances of the season were supposed to fall within the period bounded by the days of the Nativity and the Epiphany, the special pageantries, with a view to which the Lords of Misrule were appointed, in the more exalted quarters, were, in years of high festival, spread over a much more extended time;—and that their potential dignities were in full force, if not in full display, from the eve of All-hallows to the close of Candlemas day. It is stated in Drake's "Shakspeare and his Times," that the festivities of the season, which were appointed for at least twelve days, were frequently extended over a space of six weeks:—and our readers know, from their own experience, that even in these our days of less prominent and ceremonial rejoicing, the holiday-spirit of the season is by no means to be restrained within the narrower of those limits. The Christmas feeling waits not for Christmas day. The important preparations for so great a festival render this impossible. By the avenues of most of the senses the heralds of old Father Christmas have, long before, approached, to awake it from its slumber. Signal notes, which there is no mistaking, have been played on the visual and olfactory organs, for some time past; and the palate itself has had foretastes of that which is about to be. From the day on which his sign has been seen in the heavens, the joyous influences of the star have been felt; and the moment the school-boy arrives at his home, he

is in the midst of Christmas. And if the "coming events" of the season "cast their shadows before," so, amid all its cross lights, it would be strange if there were no reflections flung behind. The merry spirit which has been awakened, and suffered to play his antics so long, is not to be laid by the exorcism of a word. After so very absolute and unquestioned a sway, it is not to be expected that Momus should abdicate at a moment's notice. Accordingly, we find that, anything enacted to the contrary notwithstanding, the genial feelings of the time, and the festivities springing out of them, contrive to maintain their footing throughout the month of January :—and Christmas keeps lingering about our homes, till he is no longer answered by the young, glad voices to whom he has not, as yet, begun to utter his solemn warnings, and expound his sterner morals,—and for whom his coming is, hitherto, connected with few memories of pain. Till the merry urchins have gone back to school, there will continue to be willing subjects to the Lord of Misrule.

In Scotland, the Abbot of Unreason was frequently enacted by persons of the highest rank ; and James V. is himself said to have concealed his crown beneath the mitre of the merry Abbot. As in England, his revels were shared by the mightiest of the land ; but they appear to have been of a less inoffensive kind, and to have imitated more unrestrainedly the license of the Roman Saturnalia, than did the merry-makings of the South. The mummeries of these personages (a faint reflection of which still exists in the Guisars whom we shall have to mention hereafter), if less costly than those of their brethren in England, were not less showy ; and though much less quaint, were a great deal more free. "The body-guards of the Abbot of Unreason were all arrayed in gaudy colors, bedecked with gold or silver lace, with embroidery and silken scarves, the fringed ends of which floated in the wind. They wore chains of gold, or baser metal gilt, and glittering with mock jewels. Their legs were adorned, and rendered voluble by links of shining metal, hung with many bells of the same material, twining from the ancle of their buskins to their silken garters ; and each flourished in his hand a rich silk handkerchief, brocaded over with flowers. This was the garb of fifty or more youths, who encircled the person of the leader. They

were surrounded by ranks, six or more in depth, consisting of tall, brawny, fierce-visaged men, covered with crimson or purple velvet bonnets, and nodding plumes of the eagle and the hawk, or branches of pine, yew, oak, fern, box-wood, or flowering heath. Their jerkins were always of a hue that might attract the eye of ladies in the bower, or serving-damsels at the washing-green. They had breeches of immense capacity, so padded or stuffed as to make each man occupy the space of five, in their natural proportions ; and in this seeming soft raiment they concealed weapons of defence or offence, with which to arm themselves and the body-guard, if occasion called for resistance. To appearance, they had no object but careless sport and glee, some playing on the Scottish harp, others blowing the bagpipes, or beating targets for drums, or jingling bells. Whenever the procession halted, they danced, flourishing about the banners of their leader. The exterior bands, perhaps, represented in dumb show, or pantomime, the actions of warriors, or the wildest buffoonery ; and these were followed by crowds, who, with all the grimaces and phrases of waggery, solicited money or garniture from the nobles and gentry that came to gaze upon them. Wherever they appeared multitudes joined them ; some for the sake of jollity, and not a few to have their fate predicted by spae-wives, warlocks, and interpreters of dreams, who invariably were found in the train of the Abbot of Unreason."

In England, not only were these merry monarchs appointed over the revelries of the great and the opulent, but—as of most of the forms of amusement over which he presided,—so of the president himself, we find a rude imitation, in the Christmas celebrations of the commonalty. Nor was the practice confined to towns ; or left exclusively in the hands of corporate or public bodies. The quotation which we have already made from Stub's "*Anatomie of Abuses*," refers to a rustic Lord of Misrule : and, while the antics which took place, under his governance, do not seem to have risen much above the performances of the morris-dancers, the gaudiness of the tinsel attire paraded by him and his band, forms an excellent burlesque of the more costly finery of their superiors. Nay the amusements, themselves, exhibit nearly as much wisdom as those of the court, with less of pretension ;

and, we dare say, created a great deal more fun at a far less cost. As to the Scottish practices, our readers will not fail to observe, from our last quotation, that the lordly Abbot and his train were little better than a set of morris-dancers themselves; and that so much of their practices as was innocent differed nothing from those which Stubs and his brother puritans deemed so ridiculous in a set of parish revellers. In fact, the Lord of Misrule seems to have set himself up all over the land; and many a village had its Master Simon, who took care that the sports should not languish for want of that unity of purpose and concentration of mirth, to which some directing authority is so essential.

We have already stated,—and have made it quite apparent, in our descriptions,—that the Christmas celebrations of the more exalted classes are not put forward for the consideration of our readers, on the ground of any great wisdom in the matter, or humor in the manner, of those celebrations, themselves. But we claim for them serious veneration, in right of the excellence of the spirit in which they originated, and the excellence of the result which they produced. The very extravagance of the court pageantries,—their profuse expenditure, and grotesque displays,—were so many evidences of the hearty reception which was given to the season, in the highest places—and so many conspicuous sanctions, under which the spirit of unrestrained rejoicing made its appeals, in the lowest. This ancient festival of all ranks, consecrated by all religious feelings and all moral influences—this privileged season of the lowly—this sabbath of the poor man's year—was recognized, by his superiors, with high observance, and honored by his governors with ceremonious state. The mirth of the humble and uneducated man received no check, from the assumption of an unseasonable gravity, or ungenerous reserve, on the part of those with whom fortune had dealt more kindly, and to whom knowledge had opened her stores. The moral effect of all this was of the most valuable kind. Nothing so much promotes a reciprocal kindness of feeling as a community of enjoyment:—and the bond of good will was thus drawn tighter between those remote classes, whose differences of privilege, of education, and of pursuit, are perpetually operating to loosen it, and threatening to dissolve it altogether. There was a great deal of wis-

dom in all this ; and the result was well worth producing, even at the cost of much more folly than our ancestors expended on it. We deny that spectacles and a wig are the inseparable symbols of sapience :—and we hold that portion of the world to be greatly mistaken which supposes that wisdom may not occasionally put on the cap and bells,—and, under that disguise, be wisdom still ! The ancient custom which made what was called a fool, a part of the establishment of princes, and gave him a right, in virtue of his bauble, to teach many a wise lesson and utter many a wholesome truth, besides its practical utility, contained as excellent a moral, and was conceived in as deep a spirit, as the still more ancient one of the skeleton at a feast. “ *Cucullus non facit monachum*,” says one of those privileged gentry,—in the pages of one who, we are sure, could have enacted a Christmas foolery, with the most foolish ; and yet had “ sounded all the depths and shallows ” of the human mind, and was himself the wisest of modern men.—“ Better a witty fool than a foolish wit.” There is a long stride from the wisdom of that sneering philosopher who laughed *at* his fellows, to his who, on proper occasions, can laugh *with* them :—and, in spite of all that modern philosophy may say to the contrary, there was, in the very extravagance of Coke and Hatton, and other lawyers and statesmen of past times,—if they aimed at such a result as that which we have mentioned, and in so far as they contributed thereto,—more real wisdom than all which they enunciated in their more solemn moods, or have put upon record in their books of the law.

In the same excellent spirit, too, everything was done that could assist in promoting the same valuable effect :—and, while the pageantries which were prepared by the court, and by other governing bodies, furnished a portion of the entertainments by which the populace tasted the season in towns, and sanctioned the rest :—care was taken, in many ways, that the festival should be spread over the country, and provision made for its maintenance in places more secluded and remote. A set of arrangements sprang up, which left no man without their influence ; and, figuratively and literally, the crumbs from the table of the rich man’s festival were abundantly enjoyed by the veriest beggar at his gate. The kindly spirit of Boaz was

abroad in all the land ; and every Ruth had leave to “eat of the bread, and dip her morsel in the vinegar.” At that great harvest of rejoicing, all men were suffered to glean ; and they with whom, at most other seasons, the world had “dealt very bitterly,”—whose names were Mara, and who eat sparingly of the bread of toil—gleaned, “even among its sheaves,” and no man reproached them. The old English gentleman, like the generous Bethlehemite, in the beautiful story, even scattered that the poor might gather ; and “commanded his young men, saying, * * * let fall also some of the handfuls of purpose for *them*, and leave them, that *they* may glean them, and rebuke *them* not :”—and the prayer of many a Naomi went up, in answer,—“blessed be he that did take knowledge of thee ;”—“blessed be he of the Lord !”

In a word, the blaze of royal and noble celebration was as a great beacon to the land, seen afar off by those who could not share in its warmth, or sit under the influence of its immediate inspirations. But it was answered from every hill-top, and repeated in every valley, of England ; and each man flung the Yule log, on his own fire, at the cheering signal. The hearth, according to Aubrey, at the first introduction of coals, was usually in the middle of the room ; and he derives from thence the origin of the saying, “Round about our coal fire.” But whether the huge faggot cracked and flustered within those merry circles, or flared and roared up the ample chimneys,—all social feelings, and all beautiful superstitions and old traditions, and local observances, awoke at the blaze ; and, from their thousand hiding places, crept out the customs and ceremonials which crowd this festal period of the year,—and of which it is high time that we should proceed to give an account, in these pages. The charmed log that (duly lighted with the last year’s brand, which, as we learn from Herriek, was essential to its virtue), scared away all evil spirits—attracted all beneficent ones. The ‘squire sat, in the midst of his tenants, as a patriarch might amid his family ; and appears to have had no less reverence, though he compounded the wassail-bowl with his own hands, and shared it with the meanest of his dependents. The little book from which we have more than once quoted, by the title of “Round about our Coal-fire,” furnishes us

with an example of this reverence, too ludicrous to be omitted. Its writer tells us that if the 'squire had occasion to ask one of his neighbors what o'clock it was, he received for answer, a profound bow, and an assurance that it was what o'clock his worship pleased ; an answer, no doubt, indicative of profound respect, but not calculated to convey much useful information to the inquirer. In fine, however, while the glad spirit of the season covered the land, hospitality and harmony were everywhere a portion of that spirit. The light of a common festival shone, for once, upon the palace and the cottage ; and the chain of an universal sympathy descended unbroken, through all ranks, from the prince to the peasant and the beggar.—

“ The damsel donned her kirtle sheen ;
 The hall was dress'd with holly green ;
 Forth to the wood did merry men go,
 To gather in the misletoe.
 Then open'd wide the baron's hall,
 To vassall, tenant, serf and all ;
 Power laid his rod of rule aside,
 And ceremony doffed his pride.
 The heir, with roses in his shoes,
Those nights might village partner chuse ;
 The lord, underogating, share
 The vulgar game of ' post-and-pair.'

* * * *

The fire with well-dried logs supplied,
 Went roaring up the chimney wide ;
 The huge hall-table's oaken face,
 Scrubbed till it shone, the *time* to grace,
 Bore then upon its massive board
 No mark to part the 'squire and lord.
 Then was brought in the lusty brawn,
 By old blue-coated serving-man ;
 Then the grim boar's head frowned on high,
 Crested with bays and rosemary.
 Well can the green-garbed ranger tell,
 How, when, and where, the monster fell ;
 What dogs, before his death, he tore,
 And all the batings of the boar.
 The wassol round, in good brown bowls,
 Garnished with ribbons, blithely trowls.

There the huge sirloin reeked ; hard by
Plum-porridge stood, and Christmas pye ;
Nor failed old Scotland to produce,
At such high-tide, her savory goose.
Then came the merry masquers in,
And carols roared with blithesome din ;
If unmelodious was the song,
It was a hearty note, and strong.
Who lists may, in their mumming, see
Traces of ancient mystery ;
White shirts supplied the masquerade,
And smutted cheeks the visors made :
But, O ! what masquers, richly dight,
Can boast of bosoms half so light !—
England was merry England, when
Old Christmas brought his sports again.
'Twas Christmas broached the mightiest ale,
'Twas Christmas told the merriest tale ;
A Christmas gambol oft would cheer
The poor man's heart through half the year."

The ceremonies, and superstitions, and sports of the Christmas season, are not only various in various places, but have varied from time to time in the same. Those of them which have their root in the festival itself, are, for the most part, common to all, and have dragged out a lingering existence even to our times. But there are many which, springing from other sources, have placed themselves under its protection, or, naturally enough, sought to associate themselves with merry spirits like their own. Old Father Christmas has had a great many children in his time, some of whom he has survived ; and not only so, but in addition to his own lawful offspring, the generous old man has taken under his patronage, and adopted into his family, many who have no legitimate claim to that distinction, by any of the wives to whom he has been united—neither by the Roman lady, his lady of the Celtic family, nor her whom he took to his bosom, and converted from the idolatry of Thor. His family appears to have been, generally, far too numerous to be entertained, at one time, in the same establishment—or indeed by the same community ; and to have rarely travelled, therefore, in a body.

In Ben Jonson's Masque of Christmas,—to which we have

already alluded,—the old gentleman is introduced, “attired in round hose, long stockings, a close doublet, a high-crowned hat, with a broach, a long thin beard, a truncheon, little ruffs, white shoes, his scarfs, and garters tied cross, and his drum beaten before him ;” and is accompanied by the following members of his fine family,—MISSRULE, CAROLL, MINCED-PIE, GAMBOLL, POST-AND-PAIR (since dead), NEW YEAR’S GIFT, MUMMING, WASSALL, OFFERING, and BABY CAKE,—or BABY COCKE, as we find him elsewhere called, but who, we fear, is dead too,—unless he may have changed his name, for we still find one of the family bearing some resemblance to the description of him given by Ben Jonson.

What a merry masque is this said masque of Christmas ! The old man, like another magician, summons his spirits from the four winds, for a general muster. The purpose, we believe, is to take a review of their condition, and see if something cannot be done to amend their prospects. We are glad to see, amongst the foremost, as he ought to be, ROAST BEEF, that English “champion bold,”—who has driven the invader, hunger, from the land, in many a well-fought fray ; and for his doughty deeds, was created a knight banneret on one of his own gallant fields, so long ago as King Charles’s time. We suppose he is the same worthy who, in the Romish calendar appears canonized by the title of St. George,—where his great adversary, Famine, is represented under the figure of a dragon. Still following ROAST BEEF, as he has done for many a long year, we perceive his faithful ’squire (bottleholder, if you will), PLUM PUDDING, with his rich round face, and rosemary cockade. He is a blackamoor, and derives his extraction from the spice lands. His oriental properties have, however, received an English education, and taken an English form ; and he has long ago been adopted into the family of Father Christmas. In his younger days, his name was “ PLUM PORRIDGE,” but since he grew up to be the substantial man he is, it has been changed into the one he now bears, as indicative of greater consistency and strength. His master treats him like a brother ! and he has, in return, done good service against the enemy, in many a hard-fought field, cutting off all straggling detachments, or flying par-

ties, from the main body, whom the great champion had previously routed. Both these individuals, we think, are looking as vigorous as they can ever have done in their lives ;—and offer, in their well-maintained and portly personages, a strong presumption that *they*, at least, have at no time ceased to be favorite guests at the festivals of the land.

Near them stands, we rejoice to see, their favorite sister Was-sail. She was of a slender figure, in Ben Jonson's day, and is so still. If the garb in which she appears has a somewhat antiquated appearance, there is a play of the lip and a twinkle of the eye, which prove that the glowing and joyous spirit which made our ancestors so merry "ages long ago," and helped them out with so many a pleasant fancy and quaint device, is not a day older than it was in the time of King Arthur. How should she grow old who bathes in such a bowl ? It is her fount of perpetual youth ! Why, even mortal hearts grow younger, and mortal spirits lighter, as they taste of its charmed waters. There it is, with its floating apples and hovering inspirations ! We see, too, that the "tricksy spirit," whose head bears it (and that is more than every head could do), has lost none of his gambols ; and that he is, still, on the best of terms with the Turkey who has been his play-fellow, at these holiday times, for so many years. The latter, we suppose, has just come up from Norfolk, where Father Christmas puts him to school ; and the meeting on both sides seems to be of the most satisfactory kind.

MUMMING, also, we see, has obeyed the summons, although he looks as if he had come from a long distance, and did not go about much now. We fancy he has become something of a student. MISRULE too, we believe, has lost a good deal of his mercurial spirit, and finds his principal resource in old books. He has come to the muster, however, with a very long "feather in his cap," as if he considered the present summons portentous of good fortune. He looks as if he were not altogether without hopes of taking office again. We observe, with great satisfaction, that the Lord of Twelfth-night has survived the revolutions which have been fatal to the King of the Cockneys, and so many of his royal brethren ; and that he is still, "every inch a king." Yonder he

comes, under a state-canopy of eke, and wearing yet his ancient crown. The lady whom we see advancing in the distance, we take to be ST. DISTAFF. She used to be a sad romp ; but her merriest days, we fear, are over—for she is looking very like an old maid. Not far behind her, we fancy we can hear the clear voice of CAROLL singing, as he comes along, and, if our ears do not deceive us, the WAITS are coming up in another direction. The children are dropping in, on all sides.

But what is he that looks down from yonder pedestal, in the back-ground, upon the merry muster, with a double face ?—and why, while the holly and the misletoe mingle with the white tresses that hang over the brow of the one, is the other hidden by a veil ? The face on which we gaze is the face of an old man, and a not uncheerful old man ;—a face marked by many a scar, —by the channels of tears that have been dried up, and the deep traces of sorrows passed away. Yet does it look placidly down, from beneath its crown of evergreens, on the joyous crew who are assembled, at the voice of Christmas. But what aspect hath that other face, which no man can see ?—Why doth our flesh creep, and the blood curdle in our veins, as we gaze ? What awful mystery doth that dark curtain hide ? What may be written on that covered brow,—that the old man dare not lift the veil, and show it to those laughing children ? Much—much—much that might spoil the revels. Much that man might not know, and yet bear to abide. That twin-face is Janus—he who shuts the gates upon the old year, and opens those of the new—he who looks into the past and into the future, and catches the reflections of both, and has the tales of each written on his respective brows. For the past, it is known and has been suffered ;—and even at a season like this, we can pause to retrace the story of its joys and of its sorrows, as they are graven on that open forehead ; and from that retrospect, glancing to the future for hope, can still turn to the present for enjoyment. But, oh ! that veil, and its solemn enigmas !—On that other brow may be written some secret, which, putting out the light of hope, should add the darkness of the future to the darkness of the past ; until, amid the gloom behind, the festal lamps of the season, looked on by eyes dim with our

own tears, should show as sad as tapers lighted up in the chamber of the dead. God, in mercy, keep down that veil !

“ Such foresight who, on earth, would crave,
Where knowledge is not power to save ? ”

It will be our business to introduce to our readers each of the children of old Christmas, as they come up, in obedience to the summons of their father ;—reserving to ourselves the right of settling the order of their precedence :—and we will endeavor to give some account of the part which each played of old, in the revelries of the season peculiarly their own,—and of the sad changes which time has made, in the natural constitutions or animal spirits of some of them. Preparatory, however, to this, we must endeavor to give a rapid glance at the causes which contributed to the decay of a festival so ancient and universal and uproarious as that which we have described ; and brought into the old man’s family that disease to which some of them have already fallen victims, and which threatens others with an untimely extinction.

We have already shown that, so early as the reign of Elizabeth, the puritans had begun to lift up their testimony against the pageantries of the Christmas-tide ; and the Lord of Misrule, even in that day of his potential ascendancy, was described as little better than the great Enemy of Souls himself. Our friend Stubs (whose denunciations were directed against *all* amusements which, from long usage and established repetition, had assumed anything like a form of ceremonial,—and who is quite as angry with those who “ goe some to the woodes and groves, and some to the hilles and mountaines where they spende all the night in pastymes, and in the mornynge they return, bringing with them birch bowes and braunches of trees, to deck their assemblies withall,” in the sweet month of May, as he could possibly be with the Christmas revellers, although the very language in which he is obliged to state the charge against the former was enough to tempt people out “ a Maying,” and might almost have converted himself) assures the reader of his “ Anatomie,” that all who contribute “ to the maintenaunce of these execrable pastymes ” do neither more nor less than “ offer sacrifice to the devill and Satha-

nas." It is probable, however, that the people of those days, who were a right-loyal people, and freely acknowledged the claim of their sovereign to an absolute disposition of all their temporalities (any of the common or statute laws of the land notwithstanding), considered it a part of their loyalty to be damned in company with their sovereigns too; and resolved, that so long as these iniquities obtained the royal patronage, it was of their allegiance to place themselves in the same category of responsibility. Or perhaps their notion of regal prerogative,—which extended so far as to admit its right to mould the national law at its good pleasure,—might go to the further length of ascribing to it a controlling power over the moral statutes of right and wrong,—and of pleading its sanction against the menaces of Master Stubs. Or it may be that Master Stubs had failed to convince them that they were wrong, even without an appeal to the royal dispensation. Certain it is, that in spite of all that Master Stubs and his brethren could say, the sway of the Lord of Misrule, and the revels of his court, continued to flourish with increasing splendor, during this reign; and, as we have seen, lost no portion of their magnificence, during the two next, although in that time had arisen the great champion of the Puritans, Prynne,—and against them and their practices, have been directed whole volumes of vituperation, and denounced large vials of wrath.

In Scotland, however, where the reformation took a sterner tone than in the southern kingdom,—and where, as we have said, the irregularities committed under cover of the Christmas and other ceremonials, laid them more justly open to its censure, the effect of this outcry was earlier and far more sensibly felt; and even so early as the reign of Queen Mary, an act passed the Scottish parliament, whereby the Abbot of Unreason and all his "merrie disports" were suppressed.

In England, it is true that, according to Sandys, an order of the common council had issued as early as the beginning of *our* Mary's reign, prohibiting the Lord Mayor or Sheriffs from entertaining a Lord of Misrule in any of their houses; but this appears to have been merely on financial grounds, with a view of reducing the corporation expenditure,—and to have extended no further.

It was not, however, until after the breaking out of the civil

war, that the persecution of the puritans (who had long and zealously labored, not only to resolve the various ceremonials of the season into their pagan elements, but even to prove that the celebration of the Nativity at all was, in itself, idolatrous) succeeded, to any extent, in producing that result, which the war itself, and the consequent disorganization of society, must, in a great measure, have effected, even without the aid of a fanatical outcry. In the very first year of that armed struggle, the earliest successful blow was struck against the festivities with which it had been usual to celebrate this period of the year, in certain ordinances which were issued for suppressing the performance of plays, and other diversions; and in the following year, some of the shops in London were, for the first time, opened on Christmas day, in obedience to the feelings which connected any observance of it with the spirit of popery. By the year 1647, the puritans had so far prevailed, that, in various places, the parish-officers were subjected to penalties for encouraging the decking of churches, and permitting divine service to be performed therein, on Christmas morning;—and, in the same year, the observance of the festival itself, with that of other holidays, was formally abolished by the two branches of the legislature.

It was found impossible, however, by all these united means, to eradicate the Christmas spirit from the land; and many of its customs and festivities continued to be observed, not only in obscure places, but even in towns, in spite of prohibition, and in spite of the disarrangement of social ties. The contest between the puritan spirit and the ancient spirit of celebration, led to many contests: and we have an account, in a little book, of which we have seen a copy in the British Museum (entitled “*Canterbury Christmas; or a True Relation of the Insurrection in Canterbury*”), of the disturbances which ensued in that city upon the Mayor’s proclamation, issued in consequence of that parliamentary prohibition, at the Christmas which followed. This said proclamation, it appears, which was made by the city crier, was to the effect “that Christmas-day, and all other superstitious festivals, should be put downe, and that a market should be kept upon Christmas-day.” This order, it goes on to state, was “very ill taken by the country,”—the people of which neglected to bring their pro

visions into the town, and gave other tokens of their displeasure of a less negative kind. For a few of the shopkeepers in the city, "to the number of twelve, at the most," having ventured to open their shops, in defiance of the general feeling, "they were commanded by the multitude to shut up again, but refusing to obey, their ware was thrown up and down, and they at last forced to shut in."

Nor were the revilings of the puritans against the lovers of Christmas observances suffered to remain unanswered. Many a squib was directed against the Roundheads; and the popular regret for the suppression of their high festival was skilfully appealed to by royalist politicians and favorers of the ancient religion. The connexion between the new condition of things in church and state, and the extinction of all the merriment of the land was carefully suggested, in publications that stole out in spite of penalties, and were read in defiance of prohibitions. As an example, that curious little tract, from which we have more than once quoted, under the title of "An Hue and Cry after Christmas," bears the date of 1645; and we shall best give our readers an idea of its character, by setting out that title at length,—as the same exhibits a tolerable abstract of its contents. It runs thus:—

"The arraignment, conviction, and imprisoning of Christmas, on St. Thomas day last, and how he broke out of prison in the holidayes, and got away, onely left his hoary hair and gray beard, sticking between two iron bars of a window. With an Hue and Cry after Christmas, and a letter from Mr. Woodcock, a fellow in Oxford, to a malignant lady in London. And divers passages between the lady and the cryer, about Old Christmas: and what shift he was fain to make to save his life, and great stir to fetch him back again. Printed by Simon Minc'd Pye, for Cissely Plum-Porridge; and are to be sold by Ralph Fidler Chandler, at the signe of the Pack of Cards, in Mustard Alley, in Brawn Street." Besides the allusions contained, in the latter part of this title, to some of the good things that follow in the old man's train, great pains are taken by the cryer in describing him, and by the lady in mourning for him, to allude to many of the cheerful attributes that made him dear to the people. His great antiquity and portly appearance are likewise insisted upon. "For age this

hoarie headed man was of great yeares, and as white as snow, he entered the Romish Kalendar time out of mind, as o'd or very neer as Father Mathusalem was, one that looked fresh in the Bishops' time, though their fall made him pine away ever since ; he was full and fat as any divine doctor, on them all, he looked under the consecrated lawne sleeves, as big as Bulbeefe, just like Bacchus upon a tunne of wine, when the grapes hang shaking about his eares ; but since the Catholike liquor is taken from him he is much wasted, so that he hath looked very thin and ill of late." "The poor," says the cryer to the lady, "are sory for" his departure, "for they go to every door a-begging, as they were wont to do (*good Mrs., Somewhat against this good time*), but Time was transformed, *Away, be gone, here is not for you.*" The lady, however, declares that she, for one, will not be deterred from welcoming old Christmas. "No, no," says she, "bid him come by night over the Thames, and we will have a back-door open to let him in ;"—and ends by anticipating better prospects for him another year.

And by many a back-door was the old man let in, to many a fire-side, during the heaviest times of all that persecution and disgrace. On the establishment of the Commonwealth, when the more settled state of things removed some of the causes which had opposed themselves to his due reception, the contests of opposition between the revived spirit of festival and the increased sectarian austerity became more conspicuous. There is an order of the parliament, in 1652, again prohibiting the observance of Christmas-day—which proves that the practice had revived ; and there are examples of the military having been employed to disperse congregations assembled for that purpose. In the "*Vindication of Christmas*," published about this time, the old gentleman, after complaining bitterly of the manner in which he was "used in the city, and wandering into the country, up and down, from house to house, found small comfort in any," asserts his determination not to be so repulsed :—"Welcome, or not welcome," says he, "I am come." In a periodical publication of that day, entitled "*Mercurius Democritus, or a True and perfect Nocturnall, communicating many strange wonders, out of the world in the Moon, &c.,*" the public are encouraged to keep Christmas,

and promised better days. No. 37 contains some verses to that effect, of which the following are the two first :—

“ Old Christmass now is come to town,
Though few do him regard,
He laughs to see them going down,
That have put down his Lord.

Cheer up, sad heart, crown Christmass bowls,
Banish dull grief and sorrow,
Though you want cloaths, you have rich souls,
The *sun* may shine to-morrow.”

And again, in No. 38 :—

“ A gallant crew, stir up the fire,
The other winter tale,
Welcome, Christmass, 'tis our desire
To give thee more spic'd ale.”

On the return of the royal family to England, the court celebrations of Christmas were revived both there and at the Inns of Court ; and the Lord of Misrule came again into office. We have allusions to the one and the other, in the writings of Pepys and of Evelyn. The nobles and wealthy gentry, too, once more, at their country seats, took under their protection such of the ancient observances as had survived the persecution, and from time to time stole out of their hiding-places, under the encouragement of the new order of things. But in none of its ancient haunts did the festival ever again recover its splendor of old. The condition of Charles's exchequer, and the many charges upon it,—arising as well out of the services of his adherents, as from his own dissolute life,—left him little chance of imitating the lavish appointments of the court pageantries in the days of Elizabeth and James ; and the troubles out of which the nation had emerged, had made changes, as well in the face of the country as in the condition and character of society, alike opposed to anything like a general and complete revival of the merry doings of yore. In the country, estates had passed into new hands, and the immemorial ties between the ancient families and the tenants of the soil had been rudely severed. Many of the old establishments, in which these celebrations had been most

zealously observed, were finally broken up ; and friends, who had met together from childhood, around the Christmas fire, and pledged each other, year by year, in the wassail-bowl, were scattered by the chances of war. But out of this disturbance of the old localities, and disruption of the ancient ties of the land, a result still more fatal to these old observances had arisen—promoted, besides, by the dissipation of manners which the restored monarch had introduced into the country. Men, rooted out from their ancestral possessions, and looking to a licentious king for compensation, became hangers-on about the court ; and others who had no such excuse, seduced by their examples, and enamored of the gaieties of the metropolis and the profligacies of Whitehall, abandoned the shelter of the old trees beneath whose shade their fathers had fostered the sanctities of life, and from “country gentlemen” became “men about town.” The evils of this practice, at which we have before hinted as one of those to which the decay of rural customs is mainly owing, began to be early felt ; and form the topic of frequent complaint, and the subject of many of the popular ballads of that day. The song of the “Old and Young Courtier” was written for the purpose of contrasting the good old manners with those of Charles’s time ; and the effects of the change upon the Christmas hospitalities has due and particular notice therein. We extract it from the Percy collection, for our readers,—as appropriate to our subject, and a sample of the ballads of the time :

“THE OLD AND YOUNG COURTIER.”

“ An old song made by an aged old pate,
Of an old worshipful gentleman, who had a greate estate,
That kept a brave old house at a bountifull rate,
And an old porter to relieve the poor at his gate ;
 Like an old courtier of the queen’s,
And the queen’s old courtier.

“ With an old lady, whose anger one word asswages ;
They every quarter paid their old servants their wages,
And never knew what belong’d to coachmen, footmen, nor pages,
But kept twenty old fellows with blue coats and badges ;
 Like an old courtier, &c.

- “ With an old study fill’d full of learned old books,
With an old reverend chaplain, you might know him by his looks,
With an old buttery hatch worn quite off the hooks,
And an old kitchen, that maintained half-a-dozen old cooks :
Like an old courtier, &c.
- “ With an old hall, hung about with pikes, guns, and bows,
With old swords, and bucklers, that had borne many shrewde blows,
And an old frize coat, to cover his worship’s trunk hose,
And a cup of old sherry to comfort his copper nose ;
Like an old courtier, &c.
- “ With a good old fashion, when Christmasse was come,
To call in all his old neighbors with bagpipe and drum,
With good chear enough to furnish every old room,
And old liquor able to make a cat speak, and man dumb ;
Like an old courtier, &c.
- “ With an old falconer, huntsman, and a kennel of hounds,
That never hawked, nor hunted, but in his own grounds,
Who, like a wise man, kept himself within his own bounds,
And when he dyed gave every child a thousand good pounds ;
Like an old courtier, &c.
- “ But to his eldest son his house and land he assign’d,
Charging him in his will to keep the old bountifull mind,
To be good to his old tenants, and to his neighbors be kind ;
But in the ensuing ditty you shall hear how he was inclin’d ;
Like a young courtier, &c.
- “ Like a flourishing young gallant, newly come to his land,
Who keeps a brace of painted madams at his command,
And takes up a thousand pound upon his father’s land,
And gets drunk in a tavern, till he can neither go nor stand ;
Like a young courtier, &c.
- “ With a new fangled lady, that is dandy, nice, and spare,
Who never knew what belong’d to good house-keeping or care,
Who buys gaudy-color’d fans to play with wanton air,
And seven or eight different dressings of other women’s hair ;
Like a young courtier, &c.
- “ With a new-fashion’d hall, built where the old one stood,
Hung round with new pictures, that do the poor no good,
With a fine marble chimney, wherein burns neither coal nor wood,
And a new smooth shovelboard, whereon no victuals ne’er stood ;
Like a young courtier, &c.

“ With a new study, stuff’d full of pamphlets and plays,
And a new chaplain, that swears faster than he prays,
With a new buttery-hatch that opens once in four or five days,
And a new French cook, to devise fine kickshaws and toys;
Like a young courtier, &c.

“ With a new fashion, when Christmasse is drawing on,
On a new journey to London straight we all must begone,
And leave none to keep house, but our new porter John,
Who relieves the poor with a thump on the back with a stone;
Like a young courtier, &c.

“ With a new gentleman usher, whose carriage is compleat,
With a new coachman, footmen, and pages to carry up the meat,
With a waiting-gentlewoman, whose dressing is very neat,
Who when her lady has din’d, lets the servants not eat;
Like a young courtier, &c.

“ With new titles of honor bought with his father’s old gold,
For which sundry of his ancestors’ old manors are sold;
And this is the course most of our new gallants hold,
Which makes that good house-keeping is now grown so cold,
Among the young courtiers of the king,
Or the king’s young courtiers.”

In a word, the old English feeling seemed nearly extinct for a time ;—and the ancient customs which had connected themselves therewith, one by one, fell more or less into disuse. The chain of *universal* sympathy and *general* observance, which had long kept the festival together in all its parts, was broken ; and the parts fell asunder, and were, by degrees, lost or overlooked. Let no man say that this is scarcely worth lamenting ! Let none imagine that, in the decay of customs, useless or insignificant in themselves, there is little to regret ! “ The affections,” says Sterne, “ when they are busy that way, will build their structures, were it but on the paring of a nail ;” and there is no practice of long observance and ancient veneration,—whether among nations or individuals,—round which the affections have not in some degree twined themselves, and which are not therefore useful as supports and remembrancers to those affections. There are few of the consequences springing from civil war more lamentable than the disturbance which it gives to the social ar-

rangements—were it but to the meanest of them. It is impossible that customs long identified with the feelings should perish without those feelings (though from their own eternal principle they will ultimately revive and find new modes of action) suffering some temporary injury. It was a beautiful assertion of Dr. Johnson that his feelings would be outraged by seeing an old post rooted up from before his door, which he had been used to look at all his life,—even though it might be an encumbrance there. How much more would he have grieved over the removal of a village May-pole, with all its merry memories and all its ancient reverence !

The Christmas festival has languished from those days to this, but never has been, and never will be extinct. The stately forms of its celebration, in high places, have long since (and, in all probability, for ever) passed away. The sole and homely representative of the gorgeous Christmas prince is the mock-monarch of the Epiphany :—the laureate of our times with his nominal duties, in the last faint shadow of the court bards, and masquemakers of yore ;—and the few lingering remains of the important duties once confided to the master of the royal revels are silently and unostentatiously performed in the office of the Lord Chamberlain of to-day. But the spirit of the season yet survives ; and, for reasons which we shall proceed to point out, *must* survive. True, the uproarious merriment—the loud voice—which it sent, of old, throughout the land, have ceased ; and while the ancient sports and ceremonies are widely scattered, many of them have retreated into obscure places, and some, perhaps, are lost. Still, however, this period of commemoration is, everywhere, a merry time ; and we believe, as we have already said, that most of the children of Father Christmas are yet wandering up and down, in one place or another of the land. We call upon all those of our readers who know anything of the “old, old, very old, grey bearded gentleman,” or his family, to aid us in our search after them ;—and, with their good help, we will endeavor to restore them to some portion of their ancient honors, in England.

FEELINGS OF THE SEASON.

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OF all the festivals which crowd the Christian calendar there is none that exercises an influence so strong and universal as that of Christmas ;—and those varied superstitions, and quaint customs, and joyous observances, which once abounded throughout the rural districts of England, are at no period of the year so thickly congregated, or so strongly marked, as at this season of unrestrained festivity and extended celebration. The reasons for this are various and very obvious. In the case of a single celebration,—which has to support itself, by its own solitary influence, long, perchance, after the feeling in which it originated has ceased to operate,—whose significance is, perhaps, dimly and more dimly perceived (through the obscurity of a distance year after year receding further into shadow) by its own unaided and unreflected light,—the chances are many that the annually increasing neglect into which its observance is likely to fall, shall finally consign it to an entire obliteration. But a cluster of festivals, standing in a proximate order of succession, at once throwing light upon each other, and illustrated by a varied and numerous host of customs, traditions, and ceremonies,—of which, as in a similar cluster of stars, the occasional obscuration of any one or more would not prevent their memory being suggested, and their place distinctly indicated, by the others—present greatly multiplied probabilities against their existence being ever entirely forgotten, or their observation wholly discontinued. The arrangement by which a series of celebrations,—beautiful in themselves, and connected with the paramount event in which are laid the foundations of our religion,—are made to fall at a period otherwise of very solemn import, from its being assumed as the close of the larger of those revolutions of time into which man measures out the span of his transi-

tory existence,—and the chance which has brought down to the same point, and thrown together, the traces of customs and superstitions, both of a sacred and secular character, and uniting with the crowd of catholic observances, off-shoots from the ancient Saturnalia, remains of old Druidical rites, and glimpses into the mythology of the northern nations,—have written a series of hieroglyphics upon that place of the calendar, which, if they cannot be decyphered in every part, are still, from their number and juxtaposition, never likely to be overlooked.

But, though these causes are offered as accounting for the preservation of many customs which, without them, would long since have passed into oblivion,—which exist by virtue of the position they occupy on the calendar,—yet the more conspicuous celebrations of this season need no such aids and no such arguments. Nothing can be added to their intrinsic interest ; and they are too closely connected with the solemn warnings of man's temporal destiny, and linked with the story of his eternal hopes, ever to lose any portion of that influence, a share of which (without thereby losing, as light is communicated without diminution,) they throw over all the other celebrations that take shelter under their wing.

In every way, and by many a tributary stream, are the holy and beneficent sentiments which belong to the period increased and refreshed. Beautiful feelings, too apt to fade within the heart of man, amid the chilling influences of worldly pursuit, steal out beneath the sweet religious warmth of the season ;—and the pure and holy amongst the hopes of earth assemble, to place themselves under the protection of that eternal hope whose promise is now, as it were, yearly renewed. Amid the echoes of that song which proclaimed peace on earth and good will towards men,—making no exclusions, and dividing them into no classes,—rises up a dormant sense of universal brotherhood in the heart ; and something like a distribution of the good things of the earth is suggested, in favor of those destitute here, who are proclaimed as joint participators in the treasure thus announced from heaven. At no other period of the year are the feeling of an universal benevolence and the sense of a common Adam so widely awakened. At no season is the predominant spirit of selfishness so effectually rebuked ;—never are the circles of love so largely widened.

The very presence of a lengthened festivity—for festivity *can* never be *solitary*—would (apart from its sacred causes) promote these wholesome effects. The extended space of time over which this festival is spread,—the protracted holiday which it creates,—points it out for the gathering together of distant friends ; whom the passing nature of an occasional and single celebration would fail to collect, from their scattered places of the world. By this wise and beautiful arrangement, the spell of home is still made to cast its sweet and holy influence along the sterile regions, as along the bright places, of after-life ; and from the dark valleys and the sunny hill-tops of the world, to call back alike the spoiled of fortune, and the tired and travel-stained—to refresh themselves, again and again, at the fountain of their calmer hopes and purer feelings. A wise and beautiful arrangement this would be, in whatever season of the year it might be placed ! Wise and beautiful is any institution which sets up a rallying-place for the early affections, and re-awakens the sacred sympathies of youth !—which from that well-head of purity and peace, sends forth, as it were, a little river of living waters, to flow, with revivifying freshness and soothing murmur, along the wastes and wildernesses of after years !—which makes of that spring-time of the heart a reservoir of balm, to which, in hours of sorrow, it can return for joy, and in years of guilt, for regeneration ; and which, like the widow's cruse of oil, wasteth not, in all the ages of the mind's dearth ! But, how greatly are the wisdom and the beauty of this arrangement increased, by the sacred season at which it has been placed ! Under the sanctions of religion, the covenants of the heart are renewed. Upon the altars of our faith, the lamps of the spirit are rekindled. The loves of earth seem to have met together at the sound of the “ glad tidings ” of the season, to refresh themselves for the heaven which those tidings proclaim. From “ Abana and Pharpar,” and all the “ rivers of Damascus,” the affections are returned to bathe in “ the waters of Israel.” In many a peaceful spot and lowly home,—

“ Wi' joy unfeigned, brothers and sisters meet,  
An' each for other's welfare kindly spiers ;”—

and as the long separated look, once more, into the “ sweet familiar

faces," and listen, in that restored companionship, to strains such as "once did sweet in Zion glide" (even as they listened long ago—and, it may be, with some who are gone from them for ever)—

"Hope springs, 'exulting on triumphant wing,'  
That thus they all shall meet in future days;  
There ever bask in uncreated rays,  
No more to sigh or shed the bitter tear;  
Together hymning their Creator's praise,  
In such society yet still more dear;  
While ceaseless time moves round in an eternal sphere."

To this tone of feeling the services of the church have, for some time previously, been gradually adapting the mind. During the whole period of the Advent, a course of moral and religious preparation has been going on; and a state of expectation is, by degrees, excited, not unlike that with which the Jews were waiting for the Messiah of old. There is, as it were, a sort of watching for the great event—a questioning where Christ shall be born, and an earnest looking-out for his star in the east, that we may "come to worship him." The feeling awakened by the whole series of these services—unlike that suggested by some of those which commemorate other portions of the same sacred story—is entirely a joyous one. The lowly manner of the Saviour's coming, the exceeding humiliation of his appointments, the dangers which beset his infancy, and his instant rejection by those to whom he came, are all forgotten in the fact of his coming itself,—in the feeling of a mighty triumph, and the sense of a great deliverance;—or only so far remembered as to temper the triumph, and give a character of tenderness to the joy.—"The services of the church, about this season," says Washington Irving, "are extremely tender and inspiring. They dwell on the beautiful story of the origin of our faith, and the pastoral scenes that accompanied its announcement. They gradually increase in fervor and pathos, during the season of Advent, until they break forth in full jubilee, on the morning that brought 'peace and good-will to men.'"—"I do not know," he adds, "a grander effect of music on the moral feelings, than to hear the full choir, and the pealing organ, performing a Christmas Anthem, in a cathedral; and filling

every part of the vast pile with triumphant harmony." We confess that, for ourselves, very sensible as we are to the grander and more complicated effects of harmony, we have, on the occasion in question, been more touched by the simple song of rejoicing, as it rang, in its unaided sweetness, through the aisles of some village church. We have felt ourselves more emphatically reminded, amid pastoral scenes and primitive choirs, of the music of congratulation, which was uttered through the clear air, to men, "abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flocks by night,"—

"The hallowed anthem sent to hail  
Bethlehem's shepherds in the lonely vale,  
When Jordan hushed his waves, and midnight still  
Watched on the holy towers of Zion's hill."

Nor is the religious feeling which belongs to this season suffered to subside with the great event of the Nativity itself. The incidents of striking interest which immediately followed the birth of the Messiah—the persecutions which were directed against his life—and the starry writing of God in the sky, which, amid the rejection of "his own," drew to him witnesses from afar—all contribute to keep alive the sense of a sacred celebration, to the end of the period usually devoted to social festivity; and send a wholesome current of religious feelings through the entire season, to temper its extravagances and regulate its mirth. The worship of the shepherds—the lamentation in Rama, and the weeping of Rachael for the murder of the innocents—the miraculous escape from that massacre of the Saviour, and the flight of his parents into Egypt, with the rescued child—and the manifestation of Christ to the Gentiles (which is indeed the day of his nativity to *us*),—are all commemorated in the Christian church; and illustrated by the series of services, distributed through that period of religious worship which bears the general title of Christmas.

There is, too, in the lengthened duration of this festival, a direct cause of that joyous and holiday spirit which, for the most part (after the first tenderness of meeting has passed away, and a few tears perhaps been given, as the muster-roll is perused, to those who answer to their names no more), pervades all whom that same duration has tempted to assemble.

Regrets there will, no doubt, in most cases, be :—for these distant and periodical gatherings together of families but show more prominently the blanks which the long intervals have created ;—this putting on anew, as it were, of the garment of love, but exposes the rents which time has made since it was last worn ;—this renewing of the chain of our attachments but displays the links that are broken ! The sybil has come round again, as year by year she comes, with her books of the affections—but new leaves have been torn away. “No man,” says Shakspeare, “ever bathed twice in the same river ;”—and the home-Jordan, to which the observers of the Christmas festival come yearly back, to wash away the leprous spots contracted in the world, never presents to them again the identical waters in which last they sported,—though it be Jordan still. Amid these jubilant harmonies of the heart, there will be parts unfilled up—voices wanting. “This young gentlewoman,” says the Countess of Rousillon to Lafeu, “had a father (O that *had* ! how sad a passage ’tis !)” And surely with such changes as are implied in that past tense, some of the notes of life’s early music are silenced for ever.—“Would they were with us still !” says the old ballad ; and in the first hour of these reünions, many and many a time is the wish echoed, in something like the words ! And if these celebrations have been too long disused, and the wanderer comes rarely back to the birth-place of the affections, the feeling of sadness may be too strong for the joyous influences of the season—

“A change” *he may find* “there, and many a change !  
 Faces and footsteps and all things strange !  
 Gone are the heads of the silvery hair,  
 And the young that were, have a brow of care,  
 And the place is hushed where the children played !”—

till amid the bitter contrasts of the past with the present, and thoughts of “the loved, the lost, the distant, and the dead,” something like—

“A pall,  
 And a gloom o’ershadowing the banquet hall,  
 And a mark on the floor as of life-drops spilt,”

may spoil his ear for the voice of mirth, and darken all the revels of the merry Christmas-tide.



To few assemblages of men is it given to come together, in the scene of ancient memories, without having to "remember such things were, that were most precious."—But, excepting in those cases in which the suffering is extreme, or the sorrow immediate,—after a few hours given to a wholesome, and perhaps mournful, retrospect, the mind readjusts itself to the tone of the time; and men, for the most part, seem to understand that they are met for the purpose of being as merry as it is in their natures to be. And to the attainment of this right joyous frame of mind, we have already said that a sense of the duration of the festival period greatly contributes. In the case of a single holiday, the mind had scarcely time to take the appropriate tone, before the period of celebration has passed away; and a sense of its transitoriness tends often to prevent the effort being made with that heartiness which helps to insure success.

But when the holiday of to-day terminates only that it may make way for the holiday of to-morrow, and gladness has an ancient charter, in virtue of which it claims dominion over a series of days so extended, that the happy school-boy—and some who are quite as happy as school-boys, and as merry too,—cannot see the end of them, for the blaze of joyous things that lies between,—then does the heart surrender itself confidently to the genius of the time, and lets loose a host of cheerful and kindly feelings which it knows will not be suddenly thrown back upon it, and heaps up pleasant devices upon the glowing flame of mirth,—as we heap up logs on the roaring fire,—laying them decently aside, at the end of the season,—as we lay aside the burnt-out brand of the Yule log,—to rekindle the Christmas fire and the Christmas feeling of another year.

But there is yet another reason, in aid of those which we have enumerated, accounting for an observance of the Christmas festivities more universal—and a preservation of its traditions more accurate and entire—than are bestowed, in England, upon the festival customs of any other period of the year. This reason, which might not, at first view, seem so favorable to that end as in truth it is—is to be found in the outward and natural aspects of the season. We have been watching the year through the period of its decline,—are arrived at the dreary season of its old age,—

and stand near the edge of its grave. We have seen the rich sunshines, and sweet, but mournful twilights of the autumn, with their solemn inspirations, give place to the short days and gloomy evenings which usher in the coming Solstice. One by one, the fair faces of the flowers have departed from us; and the sweet murmuring of "shallow rivers, to whose falls melodious birds sing madrigals;" has been exchanged for the harsh voice of the swollen torrent, and the dreary music of winds that "rave through the naked tree." Through many a chilling sign of "weary winter comin' fast," we have reached the—

"Last of the months, severest of them all.

\*            \*            \*            \*            \*

For lo! the fiery horses of the sun,  
Thro' the twelve signs their rapid course have run;  
Time, like a serpent, bites his forked tail,  
And winter, on a goat, bestrides the gale;  
Rough blows the North-wind near Arcturus' star,  
And sweeps, unreined, across the polar bar."

The halcyon days, which sometimes extend their southern influence even to our stern climate, and carry an interval of gloomy calm into the heart of this dreary month, have generally, ere its close, given place to the nipping frosts and chilling blasts of mid-winter. "Out of the south" hath come "the whirlwind; and cold out of the north." The days have dwindled to their smallest stature; and the long nights, with their atmosphere of mist, shut in and circumscribe the wanderings of man. Clouds and shadows surround us. The air has lost its rich echoes, and the earth its diversified aspects; and to the immediate threshold of the house of feasting and merriment, we have travelled through those dreary days which are emphatically called "the dark days before Christmas." Of one of the gloomy mornings that usher in these melancholy days, Ben Jonson gives the following dismal description:—

"It is, methinks, a morning full of fate!  
It riseth slowly, as her sullen car  
Had all the weights of sleep and death hung at it!  
She is not rosy-fingered, but swoln black!  
Her face is like a water turned to blood,

And her sick head is bound about with clouds,  
 As if she threatened night, ere noon of day !  
 \* It does not look as it would have a hail  
 Or health wished in it—as of other morns !”

And the general discomforts of the season are bemoaned by old Sackville, with words that have a wintry sound, in the following passage which we extract from “England’s Parnassus.”—

“ The wrathfull winter, proching on a pace  
 With blustering blast had all ybard the treene,  
 And old Saturnus, with his frosty face,  
 With chilling cold had pearst the tender greene ;  
 The mantle rent wherein inwrapped beene  
 The gladsome groves that now lay over-throwne,  
 The tapers torne, and every tree downe blowne ;  
 The soyle, that erst so seemely was to seeme,  
 Was all dispoiled of her beauties hewe,  
 And stole fresh flowers (wherewith the Somer’s queene  
 Had clad the earth), now Boreas blast downe blew ;  
 And small fowles flocking, in their songs did rew  
 The Winter’s wrath, where with each thing defast,  
 In wofull wise bewayl’d the Sommer past :  
 Hawthorne had lost his motley liverie,  
 The naked twigs were shivering all for cold  
 And, dropping down the teares abundantlie,  
 Each thing, methought, with weeping eye me told  
 The cruell season, bidding me with-hold  
 Myselfe within ;”

The feelings excited by this dreary period of transition,—and by the desolate aspect of external things to which it has at length brought us,—would seem, at first view, to be little in harmony with a season of festival, and peculiarly unpropitious to the claims of merriment. And yet it is precisely this joyless condition of the natural world, which drives us to take refuge in our moral resources,—at the same time that it furnishes us with the leisure necessary for their successful development. The spirit of cheerfulness which, for the blessing of man, is implanted in his nature—deprived of the many issues by which, at other seasons, it walks abroad, and breathes amid the sights and sounds of nature—is driven to its own devices for modes of manifestation, and takes up its station by the blazing hearth. In rural districts, the

varied occupations which call the sons of labor abroad into the fields are suspended by the austerities of the time ; and to the cottage of the poor man has come a season of temporal repose, concurrently with the falling of that period which seals anew for him, as it were, the promises of an eternal rest. At no other portion of the year could a feast of equal duration find so many classes of men at leisure for its reception.—

“ With his ice, and snow, and rime,  
Let bleak winter sternly come !  
There is not a sunnier clime,  
Than the love-lit winter home.”

Amid the comforts of the fireside, and all its sweet companionships and cheerful inspirations, there is something like the sense of a triumph obtained over the hostilities of the season. Nature, which at other times promotes the expansion of the feelings, and contributes to the enjoyments of man, seems here to have promulgated her fiat against their indulgence ;—and there is a kind of inner world created, in evasion of her law—a tract won by the genius of the affections from the domain of desolation—spots of sunshine planted, by the heart, in the very bosom of shadow—a pillar of fire lit up in the darkness ! And thus the sensation of a respite from toil—the charms of renewed companionship—the consciousness of a general sympathy of enjoyment running along all the links of the social chain—and the contrasts established within to the discomforts without—are all components of that propitious feeling to which the religious spirit of the season, and all its quaint and characteristic observances, make their appeal.

There is, too (connected with these latter feelings, and almost unacknowledged by the heart of man), another moral element of that cheerful sentiment which has sprung up within it. It consists in the prospect, even at this distant and gloomy period, of a coming spring. This is peculiarly the season of looking forward. Already, as it were, the infant face of the new year is perceived, beneath the folds of the old one's garment. The business of the present year has terminated ; and, along the night which has succeeded to its season of labor, have been set up a

will be extinguished, only that the business of another seedtime may begin.

Neither, amid all its dreary features, is the *natural* season without its own picturesque beauty ;—nor even entirely divested of all its summer indications of a living loveliness, or all suggestions of an eternal hope. Not only hath it the peculiar beauties of old age ; but it hath besides lingering traces of that beauty which old age hath not been able wholly to extinguish,—and which come finely in aid of the moral hints and religious hopes of the season.

The former—the graces which are peculiar to the season itself—exist in many a natural aspect and grotesque effect, which is striking, both for the variety it offers, and for its own intrinsic loveliness.—

“ We may find it in the wintry boughs, as they cross the cold blue sky,  
While soft on icy pool and stream the pencilled shadows lie,—  
When we look upon their tracery, by the fairy frostwork bound,  
Whence the flitting red-breast shakes a shower of blossoms to the  
ground.”

The white mantle which the earth occasionally puts on, with the rapidity of a spell, covering, in the course of a night, and while we have slept, the familiar forms with a sort of strangeness, that makes us feel as if we had awakened in some new and enchanted land—the fantastic forms assumed by the drifting snow—the wild and fanciful sketching of old winter upon the “frosty pane”—the icicles that depend, like stalactites, from every projection, and sparkle in the sun like jewels of the most brilliant water—and, above all, the feathery investiture of the trees above alluded to, by which their minute tracery is brought out with a richness, shaming the carving of the finest chisel—are amongst the features which exhibit the inexhaustible fertility of nature, in the production of striking and beautiful effects. Hear how one of our best poetesses, Mary Howitt, sings of these graces.—

“ One silent night hath passed,—and lo !  
How beautiful the earth is now !  
All aspect of decay is gone,  
The hills have put their vesture on,  
And clothed is the forest bough.

Say not 'tis an unlovely time !  
 Turn to the wide, white waste thy view ;  
 Turn to the silent hills that rise,  
 In their cold beauty to the skies ;  
 And to those skies intensely blue.

\* \* \* \*

Walk now among the forest trees,—  
 Saidst thou that they were stripped and bare ?  
 Each heavy bough is bending down  
 With snowy leaves and flowers—the crown  
 Which Winter regally doth wear.

'Tis well—thy summer garden ne'er  
 Was lovelier, with its birds and flowers,  
 Than is this silent place of snow,  
 With feathery branches drooping low,  
 Wreathing around thee shadowy bowers !"

While on the subject of the natural beauties of this season, we must introduce our readers to some admirable verses, which have been furnished to us by our friend Mr. Stoddart, the author of that fine poem the "Death-Wake,"—and in which its peculiar aspects are described with a very graphic pen.—

#### A WINTER LANDSCAPE.

" The dew-lark sitteth on the ice, beside the reedless rill ;  
 The leaf of the hawthorn flutters on the solitary hill ;  
 The wild lake weareth on its heart a cold and changed look,  
 And meets, at the lip of its moon-lit marge, the spiritual brook.

Idly basks the silver swan, near to the isle of trees,  
 And to its proud breast come and kiss the billow and the breeze ;  
 They wash the eider, as they play about the bird of grace,  
 And boom, in the same slow mood, away, to the moveless mountain-base.

The chieftain-deer, amid the pines, his antlered forehead shows,  
 And scarcely are the mosses bent where that stately one arose ;  
 His step is as the pressure of a light, beloved hand,  
 And he looketh like a poet's dream, in some enchanted land !

A voice of Winter, on the last wild gust of Autumn borne,  
 Is hurried from the hills afar, like the windings of a horn :  
 And solemnly and heavily the silver birches groan,  
 And the old ash waves his wizard hand, to the dim, mysterious tone.

And noiselessly, across the heaven, a grey and vapory shred  
Is wandering, fed by phantom clouds that, one by one, are led  
Out of the wide north, where they grow within the aged sea,  
And in their coils the yellow moon is laboring lazily !

She throws them from her mystic urn, as they were beckoned back  
By some enchantress, working out her spells upon their track ;  
Or gathers up their fleecy folds, and shapes them as they go,  
To hang around her beautiful form a tracery of snow.

Lo ! Winter cometh !—and his hoar is heavy on the hill,  
And curiously the frostwork forms below the rimy rill ;  
The birth of morn is a gift of pearl to the heath and willow-tree,  
And the green rush hangs o'er its water-bed, shining and silvery.

From the calm of the lake, a vapor steals its restless wreath away,  
And leaves not a crisp on the quiet tarn, but the wake of the swan at play ;  
The deer holds up the glistening heath, where his hoof is lightly heard,  
And the dew-lark circleth to his song,—sun-lost and lonely bird !”

But the season hath other striking aspects of its own. Pleasant, says Southey,—

“ To the sobered soul,  
The silence of the wintry scene,  
When nature shrouds her in her trance,  
In deep tranquillity.

Not undelightful now to roam  
The wild-heath sparkling on the sight ;  
Not undelightful now to pace  
The forest's ample rounds,—

And see the spangled branches shine,  
And snatch the moss of many a hue,  
That varies the old tree's brown bark,  
Or o'er the grey-stone spreads.”

Mr. Southey might have mentioned, too, as belonging to the same class of effects with those produced by the mosses “of many a hue,” that “vary the old tree's brown bark,”—those members of the forest which retain their dead and many-tinted leaves till the ensuing spring, hanging occasional wreaths of strange and fantastic beauty in the white tresses of winter : together with the rich contrast presented by the red twigs of the

dog-wood, amid the dark colors of the surrounding boughs. The starry heavens, too, at this period of the year, present an occasional aspect of extraordinary brilliancy; and the long winter nights are illustrated by a pomp of illumination, presenting magnificent contrasts to the cold and cheerless earth, and offering unutterable revelations at once to the physical and mental eye.

Amongst the traces of a *former* beauty not utterly extinguished, and the suggestions of a summer feeling not wholly passed away, we have those both of sight and scent and sound. The lark, "all independent of the leafy spring," as Wordsworth says, has not long ceased to pour his anthem through the sky. In propitious seasons, such as we have enjoyed for some years past, he is almost a Christmas-carol singer. The China-roses are with us still; and, under proper management, will stay with us till the snowdrops come. So will the anemones and the wall-flowers; and the aconite may be won to come, long "before the swallow dares, and take the winds of *January* with beauty." The cold air may be kept fragrant with the breath of the scented coltsfoot, and the lingering perfume of the mignonette. Then we have rosemary, too, "mocking the winter of the year with perfume,"—

"Rosemary and rue, which keep  
Seeming and savor all the winter long."

"It looks," says Leigh Hunt, pleasantly, "as if we need have no winter, if we choose, as far as flowers are concerned." "There is a story," he adds, "in Boccacio, of a magician who conjured up a garden in winter time. His magic consisted in his having a knowledge beyond his time; and magic pleasures, so to speak, await on all who choose to exercise knowledge after his fashion."

But what we would allude to more particularly here, are the evergreens which, with their rich and clustering berries, adorn the winter season—offering a provision for a few birds that still remain, and hanging a faint memory of summer about the hedges and the groves. The misletoe with its white berries—the holly (Virgil's *acanthus*) with its scarlet berries and pointed leaves—the ivy whose berries are green—the *pyracanthus*, with its berries of deep orange—the *arbutus*, exhibiting its flowers and fruit



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upon adjacent boughs,—the glossy laurel and the pink-eyed laurestine (not to speak of the red berries of the May-bush, the purple sloes of the black thorn, or others which show their clusters upon leafless boughs—nor of the ever-green trees, the pine, the fir, the cedar or the cypress),—are all so many pleasant remembrances of the past, —and so many types to man of that which is imperishable in his own nature. And it is, probably, both *because* they are such remembrancers of what the heart so much loves, and such types of what it so much desires, that they are gathered about our doors, and within our homes, at this period of natural decay and religious regeneration ; —and mingle their picturesque forms and hopeful morals with all the mysteries and ceremonies of the season.

## SIGNS OF THE SEASON.



WE have said that the coming festivities of the season “fling their shadows” long before :—the *avant-couriers* of the old man are to be seen advancing in all directions. At home and abroad, —in town and in country—in the remote farm-stead and on the king’s highway—we are met by the symptoms of his approach, and the arrangements making for his reception.

We will not dwell here on the domestic operations, which are so familiar to all—the ample provision for good cheer, which has long been making in every man’s home, who can, at any time, afford to make good cheer at all. We need not remind our town-readers of the increased activity visible in all the interior departments of each establishment, and the apparent extent and complication of its foreign relations ;—the councils held with the house-keeper and cook—the despatches to the butcher, baker, poulterer, and confectioner, which are their consequence,—and the efficient state of preparation which is arising out of all these energetic movements. To our country-readers we need not dwell upon the slaughter of fowls in the poultry-yard, and game in the field ; or the wholesale doings within doors for the manufacture of pastry of all conceivable kinds, and in all its conceivable forms. And to neither the one nor the other is it necessary that we should speak of the packages, in every shape and size, which both are getting ready,—for the interchange, between friends, of the commodities of their respective positions. Here, however, the town has clearly the advantage in point of gain, and the country in point of character ;—the former having little besides barrels of oysters and baskets of Billingsgate fish, to furnish to the country larders, in return for the entire range of the products of the dairy, farm-yard, and game-field.

But however lightly we may allude to the other articles which enter into the charge of the commissariat department, and have no distinctive character, at this particular season, beyond their unimaginable abundance,—we are by no means at liberty, without a more special notice, to pass over the mystery of MINCE-PIE ! We speak not here of the *merits* of that marvellous compound ; because a dish which has maintained, without impeachment, since long before the days of honest old Tusser (who calls these marvels shred-pies), the same supreme character which it holds amongst the men of these latter days, may very well dispense with our commendation : and every school-boy knows, from his own repeated experience, the utter inadequacy of language to convey any notion of the ineffable flavor of his unapproachable viand. The poverty of speech is never so conspicuous, as when even its richest forms are used for the purpose of describing that which is utterly beyond its resources ; and we have witnessed most lamentable, although ludicrous failures, on the part of eloquent, but imprudent men, in their ambitious attempts to give expression to their sensations, under the immediate influence of this unutterable combination. It is, therefore, to other properties than those which make their appeal to the palate, that we must confine ourselves, in our mention of mince-pie.

The origin of this famous dish, like that of the heroic in all kinds and classes, is involved in fable. By some it has been supposed, from the oriental ingredients which enter into its composition, to have a reference (as probably had also the plum-porridge of those days) to the offerings made by the wise men of the East ; and it was anciently the custom to make these pies of an oblong form, thereby representing the manger in which, on that occasion, those sages found the infant Jesus. Against this practice (which was of the same character with that of the little image called the Yule Dough, or Yule Cake, formerly presented by bakers to their customers, at the anniversary of the Nativity), the puritans made a vehement outcry, as idolatrous ;—and certainly it appears to us somewhat more objectionable than many of those which they denounced, in the same category. Of course, it was supported by the Catholics with a zeal, the larger part of which (as in most cases of controversy where the passions are engaged) was de-

rived from the opposition of their adversaries ;—and the latter having pronounced the mince-pie to be an abomination, the eating thereof was immediately established as a test of orthodoxy by the former. Sandys mentions that, even when distressed for a comfortable meal, they would refuse to partake of this very tempting dish, when set before them,—and mentions John Bunyan, when in confinement, as an example. He recommends that, under such extreme circumstances, they should be eaten with a protest, as might be done by a lawyer, in a similar case.

In a struggle like this, however, it is clear that the advocates of mince-pie were likely to have the best of it,—through the powerful auxiliary derived to their cause, from the savoriness of the dish itself. The legend of the origin of eating roast-pig, which we have on the authority of Charles Lamb, exhibits the rapid spread of that practice, against the sense of its abomination, on the strength of the irresistible appeals made to the palate by the *crackling*. And, accordingly, in the case of mince-pie, we find that the delicious compound has come down to our days (stripped of its objectionable forms and more mystic meanings, from the moment when they ceased to be topics of disputation)—and is freely partaken of by the most rigid presbyterian—who raises “no question” thereon, “for conscience sake.”

It may be observed, however, that relics of the more recondite virtues ascribed to this dish, by the Catholics, in the days of its sectarian persecution, still exist—in the superstitions which attach certain privileges and promises to its consumption. In some places the form of this superstition, we believe, is, that for every house in which a mince-pie shall be eaten, at the Christmas season, the eater shall enjoy a happy month in the coming year. As, however, this version would limit the consumption (as far as any *future* benefit is attached to it), to the insufficient number of twelve, we greatly prefer an edition of the same belief which we have met with elsewhere,—and which promises a happy *day* for every individual pie eaten, during the same period ; thereby giving a man a direct and prospective interest in the consumption of as large a number out of three hundred and sixty-five, as may happen to agree with his inclination.

Leaving, however, those proceedings which are going on within

our homes,—and of which the manufacture of mince-pies forms so important an article,—we must turn to the symptoms of the approaching holiday that meet the eye, at every turn which we make out of doors. He who will take the king's highway, in search after these,—planting himself on the outside of a stage-coach,—will have the greater number of such signs brought under his observation, in the progress of a journey which whirls him through town and village, and by park and farm-house.

The road is alive with travellers ; and along its whole extent there is an air of aimless bustle, if we may so express ourselves—an appearance of active idleness. No doubt, he who shall travel that same road, in the days of hay-making or harvest, will see as dense a population following their avocations in the open air, and swarming in the fields. But then, at those periods of labor, the crowds are more widely scattered over the face of the country ; and each individual is earnestly engaged in the prosecution of some positive pursuit, amid a silence scarcely broken by the distant whistle or occasional song, that comes faintly to the ear, through the rich sunny air. People are busier without being so bustling. But now, all men are in action, though all men's business seems suspended. The population are gathered together in groups, at the corners of streets, or about the doors of ale-houses ; and the mingling voices of the speakers, and the sound of the merry laugh, come sharp and ringing through the clear frosty air. There is the appearance, every way, of a season of transition. The only conspicuous evidence of the business of life going forward, with a keen and steady view to its ordinary objects, exists in the abundant displays made at the windows of every shopkeeper, in every village, along the road. Vehicles of all kinds are in motion ;—stage-coach, post-chaise, and private carriage are, alike, filled with travellers, passing, in all directions, to their several places of assembling,—and give glimpses of faces bright with the reawakened affections that are radiating, on all sides, to common centres. Everywhere, hearts are stirred, and pulses quickened, by pleasant anticipations ;—and many a current of feelings which, for the rest of the year, has wandered only in the direction of the world's miry ways, and been darkened by its pollutions, met by the memories of the season, and

turned back from its unpleasing course, is flowing joyously back, by every highway, into the sweet regions of its pure and untainted spring.

But of all wayfarers who are journeying towards the haunts of Christmas, who so happy as the emancipated school-boy!—and of all vehicles that are carrying contributions of mirth to that general festival, what vehicle is so richly stored therewith as the post-chaise that holds a group of these young travellers! The glad day which has been the subject of speculation, so long before (and has been preceded by days which, in their imaginary calendar, are, beyond any question, the very longest days of all the year), has at length arrived—after seeming as if it never would arrive; and the long restrained and hourly increasing tide of expectation has at length burst its barriers, and is rushing forward, with no little noise, into the sea of fruition. “*Eja! quid silemus?*” says the well-known breaking-up song of the Winchester boys; and the sentiment therein expressed is wide awake (as everything must be, on this morning, that lies within any reasonable distance of their voices), in the breast of every school-boy, at all schools.

“Appropinquat ecce! felix  
 Hora gaudiorum,  
 Post grave tedium,  
 Advenit omnium  
 Meta petita laborum.  
     Domum, domum, dulce domum!  
     Domum, domum, dulce domum!  
     Dulce, dulce, dulce domum!  
     Dulce domum resonemus.

“Musa! libros mitte, fessa;  
 Mitte pensa dura,  
 Mitte negotium,  
 Jam datur otium,  
 Mea mittito cura!  
     Domum, domum, &c.

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“Heus, Rogere, fer caballos;  
 Eja nunc eamus,  
 Limen amabile,

Matris et oscula,  
Suaviter et repetamus.  
Domum, domum, &c.

“Concinamus ad Penates,  
Vox et audiat;  
Phosphore! quid jubar,  
Segnius emicans,  
Gaudia nostra moratur.  
Domum, domum, &c.”

And away they go!—well inclined to act up to the injunctions of the ancient song. “*Concinamus, O Sodales!*”—our readers will do well, on the present occasion, to translate the verb by its English equivalent, to shout. “*Vox et audiat!*”—small doubt of that! That deaf-looking old woman, by the way-side, must be “very deaf indeed,” if the sounds of that merriment have failed at least to reach her ears,—though they may get no further; for she looks like one of those in whom all the avenues by which mirth reaches the heart, where they have not been closed at their external outlets, by the infirmities of age, are choked up within, by the ruins of that heart itself. But the entire progress of these glad hearts, to-day, is in the nature of a triumph; and all objects, in its course, are ministers to their unreflecting mirth. Theirs is the blessed age (and this its most privileged day), when the spirit can extract from all things the chyle of cheerfulness. That urchin who is flinging alms (a most gracious act in childhood!) is doing so to the sound of his merry neighbor’s trumpet,—and yet the act performed (and the duty remembered) amid all the heyday and effervescence of the spirits, has not lost its gracefulness, for the frolicsome mood by which it is attended. There are men in this world, who dispense their charities to the flourish of *their own* trumpets; and though they are practised performers on that instrument, and play with considerable skill, the effect is unpleasant, and the act a mockery. Away go the light-hearted boys!—away past the aged and the poor (as happiness has long since done, and the happy have long continued to do!) awaking the shrill echoes of the road, and all its adjacent fields with the sound of their revelry! Every school-boy knows the programme. Flags flying—horns blowing,—racing against rival chaises—

taunts from the foremost—cheers from the hindmost—all sorts of practical jokes upon each other, and upon all they meet and all they pass—and above all, the loud ringing laugh, the laugh of boyhood, so unlike all other laughter—that comes out clear and distinct—direct from the heart—stopping nowhere on its way—not pausing to be questioned by the judgment, nor restrained by the memory—presenting no hollowness nor flatness to the nicest attention—betraying no under-tone to the finest ear—giving true and unbroken “echoes to the seat where *mirth* is throned”—born spontaneously of that spirit, and excited so often by causes too minute for older eyes to see. And it is in this very causelessness that consists the spell of childhood’s laughter, and the secret of youth’s unmingled joy. We seldom begin to seek *reasons* for being gay, till we have had some for being grave,—and the search after the former is very apt to bring us upon more of the latter. There are tares among that wheat. The moment we commence to distrust our light-heartedness, it begins to evade us. From the day when we think it necessary to reason upon our enjoyments, to philosophise upon our mirth, to analyze our gladness, their free and unmingled character is gone. The toy is taken to pieces, to see of what it is composed, and can no more be put together in the same perfect form. They who have entered upon the paths of knowledge, or gone far into the recesses of experience,—like the men of yore, who ventured to explore the cave of Trophonius,—may, perhaps, find something higher and better than the light-heartedness they lose,—but they smile never more as they smiled of old. The fine clear instrument of the spirit, that we bring with us from heaven, is liable to injury from all that acts upon it here ; and the string that has once been broken, or disordered, repair it as we may, *never*, again, gives out the precise note which it did before. The old man,—nay, even the young man,—let him be as merry as he may, and laugh as long and loudly as he will—never laughs as the school-boy laughs.

But of this, and all the slumbering passions yet to be awakened in those young breasts—and of many a grief to come, there is no token to darken the joy of to-day. The mighty pleasures towards which they are hastening, have as yet never “broken the word



of promise to their hope." The postillions are of their party ;—and even he with the bottle-nose, who seems to be none of the youngest, is a boy, for the nonce. The very horses appear to have caught the spirit of the occasion ; and toss their heads, and lay their haunches to the ground, and fling out their fore-legs, as if they drew the car of Momus. The village boys return them shout for shout, fling up their hats as the triumph approaches, and follow it till the breath fails. The older passer-by returns their uproarious salute, taking no umbrage at their mischievous jokes and impish tricks,—and turning, as the sounds of the merry voices die in the distance, to a vision of the days when he, too, was a boy, and an unconscious rehearsal of the half-forgotten song of "Dulce, dulce domum !"

And then the "limen amabile," and the "matris oscula," and the "Penates," towards which they are advancing!—the yearning hearts that wait within those homes to clasp them!—the bright eyes that are even now looking out from windows, to catch the first token of "their coming, and look brighter when they come!"—the quiet halls that shall ring to-night to their young voices ; and the lanes and alleys whose echoes they shall awaken to-morrow,—and still more loudly when the ice comes!—and, above all, the Christmas revelries themselves ! The whole is one crowded scene of enjoyment, across whose long extent, the happy school-boy has, as yet, caught no glimpse of that *black Monday*, which forms the opposite and distant portal of this haunted time.

Amongst the signs of the time that are conspicuous upon the roads, the traveller whose journeyings bring him towards those which lead into the metropolis, will be struck by the droves of cattle that are making their painful way up to the great mart, for this great festival. But a still more striking, though less noisy, Christmas symptom forms a very amusing object, to him who leaves London by such of its highways as lead eastward. Many a time have we seen a Norfolk coach, with its hampers piled on the roof and swung from beneath the body, and its birds depending, by every possible contrivance, from every part from which a bird could be made to hang. Nay, we believe it is not unusual with the proprietors, at this season, to refuse inside passengers of the human species, in favor of these oriental gentry, who "pay

better ;” and, on such occasions, of course, they set at defiance the restriction which limits them to carrying “four insides.” Within and without, the coaches are crammed with the bird of Turkey ;—and a gentleman town-ward bound, who presented himself at a Norwich coach-office, at such a time, to inquire the “fare to London,” was pertly answered by the book-keeper, “Turkeys.” Our readers will acquit us of exaggeration, when we tell them that Mr. Hone, in his *Every Day Book*, quotes, from an historical account of Norwich, an authentic statement of the amount of turkeys which were transmitted from that city to London, between a Saturday morning and the night of Sunday, in the December of 1793 ;—which statement gives the number as one thousand seven hundred, the weight as nine tons, two cwt., and two lbs., and the value as £680. It is added that, in the two following days, these were followed by half as many more. We are unable to furnish the present statistics of the matter ; but, in forty years which have elapsed since that time, the demand, and, of course, the supply must have greatly increased ; and it is probable that the coach proprietors find it convenient to put extra carriages on the road, for these occasions.

Norfolk must be a noisy county. There must be a “pretty considerable deal” of gabble, towards the month of November, in that English Turkistan. But what a silence must have fallen upon its farm-yards, since Christmas has come round ! Turkeys are indisputably born to be killed. That is an axiom. It is the end of their training,—as it ought to be (and, in one sense, certainly *is*) of their desires. And, such being the destiny of this bird, it may probably be an object of ambition with a respectable turkey, to fulfil its fate, at the period of this high festival. Certain it is that, at no other time, can it attain to such dignities as belong to the turkey who smokes on the well stored table of a Christmas dinner, the most honored dish of all the feast.

One of the most striking signs of the season—and which meets the eye in all directions—is that which arises out of the ancient, and still familiar, practice of adorning our houses and churches with evergreens, during the continuance of this festival. The decorations of our mantel-pieces, and, in many places, of our windows,—the wreaths which ornament our lamps and Christmas

candles—the garniture of our tables,—are alike gathered from the hedges and winter gardens ; and, in the neighborhood of every town and village, the traveller may meet with some sylvan procession, or some group of boys, returning from the woods, laden with their winter greenery, and engaged in what we have heard technically called “ bringing home Christmas.” This symptom of the approaching festivity is mentioned by Gay, in his “ Trivia :”

“ When Rosemary and Bays, the poet’s crown,  
Are bawl’d in frequent cries through all the town ;  
Then judge the festival of Christmass near,  
Christmass, the joyous period of the year !  
Now with bright holly all the temples strow ;  
With Laurel green, and sacred Mistletoe.”

The practice of these decorations, which is recommended to modern times, by its own pleasantness and natural beauty, is of very high antiquity,—and has been ascribed, by various writers, to various sources. They who are desirous of tracing a Christian observance to a Christian cause, remind us of those figurative expressions, in the prophets, which speak of the Messiah as the “ Branch of righteousness,” &c. ; and describe, by natural allusions, the fertility which should attend his coming.—“ The Lord shall comfort Zion,” says Isaiah : “ he will comfort all her waste places ; and he will make her wilderness like Eden, and her desert like the garden of the Lord.” Again :—“ The glory of Lebanon shall come unto thee, the fir-tree, the pine-tree and the box together, to beautify the place of my sanctuary ; and I will make the place of my feet glorious.” And Nehemiah, on an occasion of rejoicing, orders the people, after the law of Moses, to “ go forth unto the mount, and fetch olive branches, and pine branches, and myrtle branches, and palm branches, and branches of thick trees ;” and to make booths thereof, “ every one upon the roof of his house, and in their courts, and in the courts of the house of God,” and in the streets :—“ and all the congregation of them that were come again out of the captivity,” sat under these booths, “ and there was very great gladness.” A writer in the *Gentleman’s Magazine* asks if this custom may not be referred, as well as that of the palms on Palm Sunday, to that passage, in the Scripture account of Christ’s entry into Jerusalem, which

states that the multitude "cut down branches from the trees, and strawed them in the way."

The practice, however, of introducing flowers and branches amongst the tokens of festivity, seems, and very naturally, to have existed universally and at all times. It was, as we know, a pagan manifestation of rejoicing and worship; and is forbidden, on that express ground, in early councils of the Christian church. Hone, in his *Every-day Book*, quotes Polydore Vergil, to the effect that "trymmyng of the temples with hangynges, flowres, boughes and garlondes, was taken of the heathen people, whiche decked their idols and houses with suche array;" and it came under the list of abominations denounced by the Puritans, for the same reason. The practice was also in use amongst the nations both of Gothic and Celtic origin; and Brand quotes from Dr. Chandler's "*Travels in Greece*," a very beautiful superstition, mentioned as the reason of this practice, amongst the votaries of Druidism. "The houses, he says, were decked with evergreens in December, that the sylvan spirits might repair to them, and remain unnipped with frost and cold winds, until a milder season had renewed the foliage of their darling abodes."

In England, the practice, whencesoever derived, has existed from the very earliest days; and, in spite of outcry and prohibition, has come down, in full vigor, to our own. In former times, as we learn from Stow, in his *Survey of London*, not only were our houses and churches decorated with evergreens, but also the conduits, standards, and crosses in the streets;—and, in our own day, it continues to form a garniture not only of our temples and our houses, but constitutes a portion of the striking display made at this festive season, in our markets and from the windows of our shops. Holly forms a decoration of the shambles; and every tub of butter has a sprig of rosemary in its breast.

The plants most commonly in use, for this purpose, appear to have generally been the holly, the ivy, the laurel, the rosemary and the misletoe,—although the decorations were by no means limited to these materials. Brand expresses some surprise at finding cypress included in the list, as mentioned in the tract called "*Round about our Coal fire*,"—and observes that he "should as soon have expected to see the *yew* as the cypress used

on this joyful occasion." The fact, however, is, that yew *is* frequently mentioned amongst the Christmas decorations,—as well as box, pine, fir, and indeed the larger part of the Christmas plants which we have enumerated in a former chapter. The greater number of these appear to have been so used, not on account of any mystic meanings supposed to reside therein, but simply for the sake of their greenery, or of their rich berries. Stow speaks of the houses being decked with "whatsoever the year afforded to be green;"—and Sandys observes that, "at present, great variety is observed in decorating our houses and buildings, and many flowers are introduced that were unknown to our ancestors, but whose varied colors add to the cheerful effect,—as the chrysanthemum, satin-flower, &c., mingling with the red berry of the holly, and the mystic misletoe. In the west of England," he adds, "the myrtle and laurustinum form a pleasing addition." There is a very beautiful custom which we find mentioned, in connexion with the subject of evergreens, as existing, at this season of the year, in some parts of Germany and Sicily. A large bough is set up in the principal room, the smaller branches of which are hung with little presents suitable to the different members of the household. "A good deal of innocent mirth and spirit of courtesy," it is observed, "is produced by this custom."

Herrick, however (a poet, amid whose absurd conceits and intolerable affectation there are samples of the sweetest versification, and touches of the deepest pathos,—and who, amongst a great deal that is liable to heavier objections still, has preserved many curious particulars of old ceremonies and obsolete superstitions), carries this custom, of adorning our houses with evergreens, over the entire year; and assigns to each plant its peculiar and appropriate season. To Christmas, he appoints those which we have stated to be most commonly used on that occasion; but insists upon a change of decoration, on the eve of Candlemas-day:—

“Down with the rosemary, and so  
Down with the baies and misletoe,  
Down with the holly, ivie, all  
Wherewith you drest the Christmas hall;  
That so the superstitious find  
Not one least branch there left behind:—

and he urges the maids to the careful performance of this change, by the following threat :—

“ For look, how many leaves there be  
Neglected there, maids, trust to me,  
So many goblins you shall see.”

The plant by which he orders these to be replaced, for Candlemas-day, is box,—whose turn is to continue,

“ Until the dancing Easter-day  
Or Easter’s-eve appeare.”

Then, the box is to make way for “ the crisped yew ;”—which is to be succeeded, at Whitsuntide, by birch, and the flowers of the season ;—and these, again, are to yield to the

“ Green rushes, then, and sweetest bents,  
With cooler oken boughs ;”—

whose reign continues, till the period again comes round, of preparation for Christmas. We believe that it is still usual, in many parts of England, to suffer the Christmas greens to remain in the windows of our churches,—and sometimes of our houses,—until Candlemas-eve.

Of those plants, then, which are considered as containing meanings that make them appropriate decorations for the Christmas-tide,—or which have, for any reason, been peculiarly devoted to that season,—the laurel, or bay, may be dismissed in a few words. Since the days of the ancient Romans, this tree has been, at all times, dedicated to all purposes of joyous commemoration ;—and its branches have been used as the emblems of peace and victory and joy. Of course, its application is obvious to a festival which includes them all ;—which celebrates “ peace on earth,”—“ glad tidings of great joy,”—and a triumph achieved over the powers of evil and the original curse, by the coming of the Saviour.

We may add that, besides forming a portion of the household decorations, it is usual, in some places, to fling branches and sprigs of laurel on the Christmas fire,—and seek for omens, amid the curling and crackling of its leaves :—

“ When laurell spirts i’ th’ fire, and when the hearth  
Smiles to itselfe and guilds the rooffe with mirth ;  
When up the Thyrses is rais’d, and when the sound  
Of sacred orgies flies around, around,”

says Herrick. At the two English universities, the windows of the college-chapels are still carefully decked with laurel, at the season of Christmas.

The holly is a plant of peculiar veneration at this period of the year,—so much so as to have acquired to itself, by a popular metonymy, the name of the season itself—being vulgarly called “ Christmas.” It is, no doubt, recommended to the general estimation in which it is held, by the picturesque forms of its dark glossy leaves, and the brilliant clusters of its rich red berries. There is, in the Harleian Manuscripts, a very striking carol, of so remote a date as the reign of Henry VI., which is quoted by most of the writers on this subject,—and gives a very poetical statement of the respective claims of this plant and of the ivy to popular regard. The inference from the second and fourth verses (taken in connexion with the authorities which place it amongst the plants used for the Christmas ornaments), would seem to be, that, while the former was employed in the decorations within doors, the latter was confined to the exteriors of buildings. Mr. Brand, however, considers those passages to allude to its being used as a vintner’s sign ; and infers, from others of the verses, that it was, also, amongst the evergreens employed at funerals. It runs thus :—

“ Nay, Ivy ! nay, it shall not be, I wys ;  
Let Holy haue the maystry, as the manner ys.

Holy stond in the halle, fayre to behold,  
Ivy stond without the dore ; she ys ful sore a cold.  
Nay, Ivy ! &c.

Holy and hys mery men they dawnsyn and they syng.  
Ivy and hur maydenys they wepyn and they wryng.  
Nay, Ivy ! &c.

Ivy hath a lyve ; she laghtyt with the cold,  
So mot they all haue that wyth Ivy hold.  
Nay, Ivy ! &c.

Holy hat berys as rede as any rose,  
 The foster the hunters kepe hem from the doos.  
 Nay, Ivy ! &c.

Ivy hath berys as blake as any slo ;  
 Ther com the oule and ete hym as she goo  
 Nay, Ivy ! &c.

Holy hath byrdys a ful fayre flok,  
 The Nyghtyngale, the Poppingy, the gayntyl Lavyrok.  
 Nay, Ivy ! &c.

Good Ivy ! what byrdys ast thou ?  
 Non but the howlet that kreye ' how, how !'  
 Nay, Ivy ! nay, hyt shal not, &c."

We had some thoughts of modernising the orthography—and, very slightly, the diction—of this curious old ballad ; but it reads best in its own quaint garb,—and even those of our friends who are not in the habit of perusing ancient writings, will find scarcely any difficulty in making it out.

The rosemary, besides its rich fragrance,—and probably *because* thereof,—was supposed to possess many occult virtues ; and was used, for the sake of one or other of them, on occasions both of rejoicing and of mourning. It was believed to clear the head, to strengthen the memory, and to make touching appeals to the heart. For these reasons, it was borne both at weddings and at funerals.—Herrick says,

" Grow for two ends : it matters not at all,  
 Be't for my bridal, or my burial."—

" There's rosemary," says Ophelia, " that's for remembrance ; pray you, love, remember :"—and the custom of decking the corpse with this flower,—as well as that of flinging its sprigs into the grave,—would naturally spring out of this touching superstition. Its presence at bridals would seem to suggest that it was dedicated to hope, as well as to memory. We have, in Shakespeare's play of " Romeo and Juliet," allusions to the use of this herb, on both of these important, but very different, occasions,—which allusions are affecting, from the application of both to the same young girl. The first—which refers to the joyous celebra-



tion,—occurs in an interview between Romeo and the nurse of Juliet,—in which arrangements are making for the secret marriage ; where the garrulous old woman observes, as hinting at Juliet's willingness,—“ she hath the prettiest sententious of it, of you and rosemary, that it would do you good to hear it.” The second is in that scene in which Juliet is supposed to be dead :—

“ *Friar.* Come, is the bride ready to go to church ?

*Capulet.* Ready to go, but never to return !”

And is inserted amongst the holy father's exhortations to resignation :—

“ Dry up your tears, and stick your rosemary

On this fair corse ; and, as the custom is,

In all her best array, bear her to church.”

Independently of the beautiful suggestion to remembrance which is made by its enduring perfume, that precious perfume itself would recommend this herb, for reasons less fine, as “ strewings fitt'st for graves.” The fact of its being in bloom, at this season, would naturally introduce the rosemary, with all its fine morals, into the Christmas celebrations :—and such customs as that which prescribed that the wassail-bowl should be stirred with a sprig of this plant, before it went round amongst friends, seem to have a very elegant reference to its secret virtues (“ that's for remembrance,” perhaps) ; and suggest that the revelings of the season, in those old times, were mingled with the best and most refined feelings of our nature.

But the misletoe !—the mystic misletoe !—where is the man whose school-boy days are gone by, in whom that word conjures up no merry memories ! “ Oh ! the misletoe bough !”—who hath not, at the name, thronging visions of sweet faces—that looked sweetest in those moments of their startled beauty, beneath the pendent bough ! If the old spells with which superstition has invested the misletoe have lost some of their power over me, it hath now another, which in earlier days I knew not of—the power to restore the distant and to raise the dead. I am to laugh no more, as I have laughed of old, beneath the influence of that mystic cognizance of the gay Christmas-tide :—but, even now as

I write thereof, look in upon my heart, bright portraits—traced with a skill which no mortal pencil shall achieve—faces on which the earth hath long lain—and others from whom the wide spaces of the world have separated me, for many a weary year—and, heavier far ! some to whom *unkindness* hath made me, too long, a stranger. There they rise, and stand, one by one, beneath the merry snare,—each with the heightened beauty on her cheek, which is the transient gift of the sacred bough !

Oh ! M—— ! how very fair is thine image in the eye of memory ! and how has thy going away changed all things for me ! The bright and the beautiful lie still about,—still bright and beautiful even to me,—but in another manner than when thou wert here ! All things are tinged with thy loss. All fair things have a look, and all sweet sounds a tone, of mourning, since thou leftest me. How long it seems !—as if ages, instead of years, of the grave had grown between us !—as if, indeed, I had known thee in some former, and far removed, state of being ! I do not love to think of thee as dead— I strive to think of thee rather as of one whom I have left behind, in the quiet valley of our youth and our love—from whom I have wandered forth, and lost my way amid the mazes of the world. But where is the clue that should lead me back to thee ? There may have been fairer (sweeter never !) things than thou in this fair world ; but my heart could never be made to believe, or understand it. Had I known thee only in that world, I might not so have marked thy beauty :—but thou wert with me, when the world left me. In the flood of the sunshine, when a thousand birds are about us, we go upon our way, with a sense that there is melody around,—but singling, perhaps, no one note, to take home to the heart, and make a worship of. But the one bird that sings to us, in the dim and silent night,—oh ! none, but they on whom the night has fallen, can know how dear its song becomes ; filling with its music all the deserted mansions of the lonely soul ! But the bird is dead—the song is hushed—and the houses of my spirit are empty, and silent, and desolate !

And thou !— whom the grave hath not hidden, nor far distance removed ! from whom I parted, as if it were but yesterday ; and yet, of whom I have already learned to think, as of one separated

from me by long years of absence and death,—as if it were very long since I had beheld thee,—as if I gazed upon thee, from a far distance, across the lengthened and dreary alleys of the valley of the dead ! Physically speaking, thou art, still, within my reach ; and yet art thou to me as if the tomb, or the cloister, had received thee,—and made of thee (what the world, or the grave, makes of all things we have loved) a dream of the night—a phantom of the imagination—an angel of the memory—a creation of the hour of shadows ! Whatever may be thy future fortunes—however thy name may, hereafter, be borne to my mortal ear,—my heart will ever refuse to picture *thee*, but as one who died in her youth !

And, *thou* !—thou too, art there with thy long fair hair, and that harp of thine, which was so long an ark of harmony for me. “Alas ! we had been friends in youth.” But *all* things bring *thee* back ; and I am haunted yet,—and shall be through the world,—by the airs which thou wert wont to sing me, long ago. I remember that—even in those days,—at times, in the silent night, when broken snatches of melodies imperfectly remembered stole through the chambers of my heart,—ever in the sweet tones in which it had learnt to love them—I have asked myself if the ties that bound us might ever be like those passing and half-forgotten melodies ! If the time could ever come when they should be like an old song, learnt in life’s happier day,—and whose memory has been treasured, to make us weep, in the years when the heart has need to be soothed by weeping ! If there would ever be a day when thy name might be sounded in mine ear, as the name of a stranger !—And that day has, long since, come ;

“For whispering tongues will poison truth.”

How truly may we be said to live but in the past, and in the future—to have our hearts made up of memory and of hope—for which the present becomes, hour after hour, more and more of a void ! And, alas ! is it not true, as a consequence, that the more they are occupied with memory, the less room have they for hope ? And thus, the one is ever gaining upon the other ; and the dark waters of the memory are hourly spreading upon that shore, where hope had room to build her edifices, and to play

about them, till, at length, they cover all,—and hope, having “no rest for the sole of her foot,” flies forward to a higher and a better shore !

And such are my visions of the misletoe !—these are amongst the spirits that rise up to wait upon my memory—“they and the other spirits of the” mystic bough ! But brighter fancies has that charmed branch for many of our readers ; and merrier spirits hide amid its leaves. Many a pleasant tale could we tell of the misletoe bough, which might amuse our readers more than the descriptions to which we are confined, if the limits of our volume would permit. But, already, our space is scarcely sufficient for our purpose. We think, we can promise our readers, in another volume, a series of tales connected with the traditions and superstitions which are detailed in the present,—and which may serve as illustrations of the customs of the Christmas-tide.

Some of the names by which this remarkable plant were formerly called are, misselden, misseldine, and more commonly, missel. Old Tusser tells us that—

“ If snow do continue, sheep hardly that fare,  
Crave mistle and ivy :”

and Archdeacon Nares says “the missel thrush” is so designated “from feeding on its berries.” From the generality of the examples in which this plant is mentioned by the name of missel, it is suggested to us, by Mr. Crofton Croker, that the additional syllable, given to the name now in common use, is a corruption of the old *tod* ; and that misletoe, or misletod, implies a *bush* or bunch of missel—such as is commonly hung up at Christmas. He quotes, in support of this suggestion, the corresponding phrase of ivy-tod, which occurs frequently in the writings of the Elizabethan age. If this be so, the expression “the misletoe bough” includes a tautology ; but, as it is popularly used, we retain it, for the instruction of such antiquarians, of remote future times, as may consult our pages for some account of the good old customs, which are disappearing so fast, and may fail to reach their day.

That this plant was held in veneration by the pagans, has been inferred from a passage in Virgil’s description of the descent into the infernal regions. That passage is considered to have an allegoric<sup>1</sup> reference to some of the religious ceremonies practised

amongst the Greeks and Romans ; and a comparison is therein drawn between the golden bough of the infernal regions, and what is obviously the misletoe :—

“ Quale solet silvis brumali frigore *Viscum*  
Fronde virere nova, quod non sua seminat arbos,  
Et croceo fœtu teretes circumdare truncos,” &c.

The reference is given by Mr. Christie, in his “ Enquiry into the ancient Greek Game ” of Palamedes ; and he mentions, likewise, the respect in which this plant was held by the Gothic, as well as the Celtic, nations. Sandys furnishes a legend from the Edda, in proof of the extraordinary qualities ascribed to it by the former. Amongst the Celtic nations, it is well known to have been an object of great veneration ; and the ceremony of collecting it by the Druids, against the festival of the winter solstice, was one of high solemnity. It was cut by the prince of the Druids, himself—and with a golden sickle. It was said that those only of the oaks were sacred to the Druids, which had the misletoe upon them ; and that the reverence of the people towards the priests, as well as their estimation of the misletoe, proceeded, in a great measure, from the cures which the former effected, by means of that plant. Medicinal properties, we believe, are still ascribed to it : and it was, not very long ago, deemed efficacious in the subduing of convulsive disorders. Sir John Colbatch, in his dissertation concerning it, observes that this beautiful plant must have been designed by the Almighty “ for further and more noble purposes than barely to feed thrushes, or to be hung up surreptitiously in houses to drive away evil spirits.” Against the latter it appears to have been used as a charm, up to the last century.

Its introduction into the Christian festival might therefore be considered appropriate, as emblematic of the conquest obtained over the spirits of darkness, by the event of the Nativity ;—and perhaps its supposed healing properties might be deemed to recommend it further, as a symbol of the moral health to which man was restored from the original corruption of his nature ; and a fitting demonstration of the joy which hailed the “ Sun of Righteousness ” that had “ arisen, with *healing* on his wings.”

Notwithstanding all this, however, Brand is of opinion that its heathen origin should exclude it, at all events, from the decorations of our churches;—and quotes a story told him by an old sexton at Teddington, in Middlesex, of the clergyman of that place having observed this profane plant intermingled with the holly and ivy which adorned the church, and ordered its immediate removal. Washington Irving, who has studied old English customs and manners with sincere regard, introduces a similar rebuke, from the learned parson to his unlearned clerk, in his account of the Christmas spent by him at Bracebridge Hall.

The reverence of the mistletoe amongst the ancient Britons, appears, however, to have been limited to that which grew upon the oak; whereas the *viscum album*, or common mistletoe,—the sight of whose pearly berries brings the flush into the cheek of the maiden of modern days,—may be gathered, besides, from the old apple-tree, the hawthorn, the lime-tree, and the Scotch, or the silver, fir. Whether there remain any traces of the old superstitions which elevated it into a moral or a medical amulet,—beyond that which is connected with the custom alluded to in the opening of our remarks upon this plant—we know not. We should, however, be very sorry to see any light let in amongst us, which should fairly rout a belief connected with so agreeable a privilege as this. That privilege, as all our readers know, consists in the right to kiss any female who may be caught under the mistletoe bough,—and, we may hope, will continue, for its own pleasantness, even if the superstition from which it springs should be finally lost. This superstition arose, clearly enough, out of the old mystic character of the plant in question,—and erects it into a charm, the neglect of which exposes to the imminent danger of all the evils of old-maidenism. For, according to archdeacon Nares, the tradition is, “that the maid who was not kissed under it, at Christmas, would not be married in that year,”—by which, we presume, the archdeacon means in the following year. Accordingly, a branch of this parasitical plant was hung (formerly with great state, but now it is generally suspended with much secrecy), either from the centre of the roof, or over the door; and we recommend this latter situation to our readers, both as less exposed to untimely observation, and because every

maiden who joins the party must, of necessity, do so by passing under it. We learn, from Brand, that the ceremony was not duly performed, unless a berry was plucked off with each kiss. This berry, it is stated by other authorities, was to be presented, for good luck, to the maiden kissed; and Washington Irving adds that, "When the berries are all plucked, the privilege ceases." If this be so, it behoves the maidens of a household to take good care that the branch, provided for the occasion, shall be as well furnished with these pearly tokens as the feast is likely to be with candidates for the holy state of matrimony. The practice is still of very common observance, in kitchens and servants' halls—particularly in the country. But, as we have hinted, we have met with it (and so, we dare say, have most of our readers) in higher scenes; and many a merry laugh have we heard ring from beneath the misletoe bough. There are lips in the world that we would gladly meet there in this coming season.

Another of the symptoms of the approaching season which has, at least to us, a very pleasing effect, consists in the bursts of solemn minstrelsy by which we are aroused from our slumbers, in the still hour of the winter nights:—or which, failing to break our sleep, mingle with our dreams, leading us into scenes of enchantment, and filling them with unearthly music. This midnight minstrelsy,—whether it comes in the shape of human voices, hallowing the night, by the chanting of the Christmas carol, or breaks upon the silence of the midwatches, from the mingling instruments of those wandering spirits of harmony, the waits,—has, in each case, its origin in the *gloria in excelsis*,—the song with which the angels hailed the birth of the Redeemer, in the fields near Bethlehem.—"As soon," says Jeremy Taylor, "as these blessed choristers had sung their Christmas carol, and taught the church a hymn, to put into her offices for ever, on the anniversary of this festivity, the angels returned into heaven." Accordingly, these nocturnal hymns, although they spread over the entire period of the Advent, grow more and more fervent and frequent as the season approaches; and the night which ushers in the great day itself is filled, throughout all its watches, with the continued sounds of sacred harmony. How beautiful is the effect given to this music, by this consideration of its meaning and

its cause ! Many and many a time have we been awakened by the melody of the waits, when

“ The floor of heaven  
Was thick inlaid with patines of bright gold ;”—

and have lain and listened to their wild minstrelsy—its solemn swells and “ dying falls,” kept musical by the distance, and made holy by the time,—till we have felt, amid all those influences, as if it were

“ No mortal business, nor no sound  
That the earth owes,”

and could have fancied that the “ morning stars ” were again singing, as of old they “ sang together for joy,” and that the sounds of their far anthem came floating to the earth. This sort of fancy has occurred, over and over again, to him who has looked out, from his bed, upon a sky full of stars,—and listened, at the same time, to invisible and distant music, under the holy impressions of the season. Shakspeare has helped us to this feeling, perhaps,—as we can trace his influence upon *all* our feelings, and upon none more than the most sacred or the most solemn :—

“ There ’s not the smallest orb which thou behold’st,  
But in his motion like an angel sings,  
Still quiring to the young-eyed cherubims ;  
Such harmony is in immortal souls.”

To the rudest carol that ever flung its notes upon the still air of those solemn hours, we have hearkened with a hush of pleasure which recognized how well—

“ Soft stillness, and the night,  
Become the touches of sweet harmony !”—

and the wildest music, that ever broke upon that solemn calm, from the instruments of the most unskilful waits,—if it were but remote enough to keep its asperities out of the ear, and send us only its floating tones,—has brought Shakspeare into our hearts again :—

“ *Portia.* Methinks it sounds much sweeter than by day.  
*Nerissa.* Silence bestows that virtue on it, madam.”



The waits of to-day are the remote and degenerate successors of those ancient bards who filled an important place in the establishments of princes and nobles,—as, also, of those wandering members of the fraternity, who, having no fixed position, carried their gift of music from place to place, as the tournament or the festival invited. Those of our readers who have much acquaintance with the old chroniclers have not to be told by us that these latter were frequently drawn together, in considerable numbers, by the Christmas celebrations. The name wait, or wayte, itself, is of great antiquity amongst us; and appears to have been the title given to some member of the band of minstrels, who either replaced the ancient minstrel-chronicler, in the royal establishments, or was, probably, under his direction;—the duty of which particular member it was to pass, at night, from door to door of the chambers, and pipe the watches, upon some species of instrument. As early as the reign of Edward III., we have mention of this individual minstrel by his title of wayte; and, in the subsequent ordinances for royal households, the name frequently occurs. Dr. Burney, in his “History of Music,” quotes from the “*Liber niger domus regis*,” of Edward IVth’s time, a full description of the duties, privileges, and perquisites of this ancient officer. It is, probably, from this member of the royal household and his office, that the corporations for towns borrowed their earliest appointment of watchmen; and the ancestors of those ancient gentlemen, whose most sweet voices are amongst the lost sounds of the metropolis,—and whose mysterious cries will soon, we fear, be a dead language,—were, no doubt, in their original institution, minstrels or waits. The sworn waits are, we believe, still attached to many corporations (although some of their duties have been alienated, and some of their prerogatives usurped),—and amongst others to that of the City of London. The bellman,—and those “wandering voices” the watchmen, where they still exist,—have, however, a title to the same high and far descent; and have succeeded to most of the offices of the ancient waits. It would seem, too, that both these latter important personages have at all times had it in view to assert their claim to a minstrel origin; their announcements being generally chanted in a species of music quite

peculiar to themselves, and such as the world can never hope to hear again, when these gentry shall be extinct. "Oh! what a voice is silent!"—wrote Barry Cornwall, long before the introduction of the new police into our streets; and the passionate exclamation must surely have originated in a prophetic vision of the extinction of the Dogberry who piped the night-watches in Bedford Square. As for those wandering musicians who charm the long nights of the Christmas time, with *unofficial* music, and are waits by courtesy, they bear the same relation to the corporation minstrels of modern times, as did the travelling bards of former days to the ancient minstrels who were established in the households of nobles or of kings. The waits, still, on some occasions, close their performance, by calling the hour,—and by certain other announcements, descriptive of the weather, or characteristic of the season.

The sacred origin and meaning of this practice have, however, in modern days, been a good deal lost sight of, by these uncertificated harmonists, in their selection of tunes. In London, particularly, the appropriate music of religious celebration,—which, in awaking the sleeper, should bring the lessons of the season directly to his heart,—are (excepting perhaps on the eve of the Nativity itself) most frequently supplanted by the airs of the theatre; and the waits, for the most part, favor us, by night, with repetitions of the melodies with which the barrel-organists have labored to make us familiarly acquainted, during the day.

The practice of hailing the Nativity with music, in commemoration of the song of the angels, is in full observance, in Roman Catholic countries, as well as in our own. There are, we fancy, few of our readers, who have not had opportunities of listening to the divine strains which mingle in the Roman services that usher in the blessed morning itself. The *noëls* of France are of the same character as the Christmas carols of England; and the visits of our street musicians at this season are closely resembled by the wanderings of the Italian *pifferari*. These *pifferari* are Calabrian shepherds, who come down from the mountains, at the season of Advent; and enter the Italian cities, saluting, with their hill music, the shrines of the Virgin and Child, which adorn the streets.

Of these rude minstrels Lady Morgan, in her "Italy," gives some account; and states that, having frequently observed them stopping to play before the shop of a carpenter in Rome, her inquiries on the subject were answered by the information that the intention of this part of their performances was to give his due share of honor to St. Joseph. Our friend, Mr. Hone, in his "Every Day Book," has given, from an old print in his possession, a representation of this practice;—in which two of these mountaineers are playing before the shrine of the Virgin. The practice is continued till the anniversary-day of the Nativity.

With modern carol singing there are few of our readers, in town or in country (for the practice, like that of which we have just spoken, is still very general), who are not well acquainted. For some curious antiquarian information on the subject, we must refer them to Mr. Sandys's Introduction,—and to a paper in Mr. Hone's book of "Ancient Mysteries." The word, itself, is derived, by Brand, after Bourne, from *cantare*—to sing, and *rola*—an interjection of joy:—and although, in vulgar acceptance, it has come to be understood as implying particularly those anthems by which the Christmas-tide is distinguished, it has, at all times, been properly applied to all songs, which are sung upon any occasion of festival or rejoicing. In strictness, therefore, even in its application to the musical celebrations of Advent, a distinction should be drawn between those carols which are of a joyous or festive character, and those more solemn ones which would be better described by the title of Christmas Hymns.

The practice itself, as applied to religious commemoration, is drawn from the very first ages of the church. It is frequently referred to in the apostolic writings; and the celebrated letter of the younger Pliny to the Emperor Trajan, in the seventh year of the second Christian century, mentions amongst the habits of the primitive Christians, their assembling, at stated times, "to sing among themselves alternately a hymn to Christ, as to God." Such a practice, however, constitutes no peculiarity of the new worship;—hymns of praise to their deities having made a portion of the rites of most religions. Indeed, in the more severe times of the early church, there are prohibitions against this form of

worship—as against several other practices to which we have alluded,—on the express ground of its resemblance to one of the customs of the pagan celebration.

The custom of celebrating the festivities of the season, by the singing of carols, in these islands, appears to have mingled with the Christmas observances, from the earliest period. We have specimens of the carols themselves, of a remote date; and have already given an extract from one, the manuscript of which, in the British Museum, is dated as far back as the thirteenth century. There are evidences of the universality of the practice in the fifteenth century; and the great popularity of these songs, about this time, is proved by the fact of a collection thereof having been printed in the early part of the following century, by Wynkyn de Worde. It is to the puritans that we appear to have been indebted for the introduction of the religious carol. Those enemies of all mirth,—even in its most innocent or valuable forms,—finding the practice of carol-singing, at this festive time, too general and rooted to be dealt with by interdiction, appear to have endeavored to effect their objects, by directing it into a channel of their own; and,—probably retaining the ancient airs,—to have adapted them to the strange religious ballads, of which we must give our readers a few specimens. The entire version of the Psalms of David, made by Sternhold and Hopkins, was published about the middle of the sixteenth century; and, some time before the middle of the seventeenth, a duodecimo volume appeared, under the title of “*Psalmes or Songs of Zion, turned into the language, and set to the tunes of a strange land, by W. S. (William Slatyr), intended for Christmas Carols, and fitted to divers of the most noted and common but solemne tunes, everywhere in this land familiarly used and knowne.*”

Of these old ballads—of both kinds,—many (and snatches of more) have survived to the present day; and may be heard—particularly in the northern counties of England,—ringing through the frosty air of the long winter nights, in the shrill voices of children, for several weeks before Christmas—probably, too, to the old traditional tunes. They are, however,—as might be expected of compositions which have no more substantial

depository than the memories of the humble classes of the young, —full of corruptions, which render some of them nearly unintelligible. The difficulty of restoring these old carols, in their original forms, is becoming yearly greater, in consequence of the modern carols, which are fast replacing them, by a sort of authority. In country places, many of the more polished carols, of modern composition, find their way into the church services of this season; and amongst the singers who practise this manner of appealing to the charities of the season, with most success, are the children of the Sunday-schools and the choristers of the village church. These, with their often sweet voices, bring to our doors the more select hymns, and the musical training, which they have gathered for more sacred places;—some such beautiful anthem as that beginning “Hark! the herald angels sing,” rather than the strange, rambling, old Christmas songs, which we well remember, when we were boys. These latter, however, occasionally, are not without a wild beauty of their own. We quote a fragment of one of them from memory. We think it begins—

“The moon shines bright, and the stars give light,  
A little before the day;”

and wanders on, somewhat after the following unconnected fashion:—

“Awake! awake! good people all!  
Awake, and you shall hear,  
How Christ, our Lord, died on the cross  
For those he loved so dear.

O fair! O fair, Jerusalem!  
When shall I come to thee?  
When shall my griefs be at an end,  
That I thy tents may see!

The fields were green as green could be,  
When, from his glorious seat,  
The Lord our God he watered us  
With his heavenly good and sweet.

And for the saving of our souls,  
Christ died upon the cross,  
We never shall do for Jesus Christ  
What he has done for us!

The life of man is but a span,  
And cut down in its flower ;  
We're here to day, and gone to-morrow,  
We're all dead in an hour.

O ! teach well your children, men !  
The while that you are here,  
It will be better for your souls,  
When your corpse lies on the bier.

To-day, you may be alive, dear man !  
With many a thousand pound ;  
To-morrow, you may be a dead man,  
And your corpse laid under ground.

With a turf at your head, dear man !  
And another at your feet,  
Your good deeds and your bad ones  
They will together meet.

My song is done, and I must begone,  
I can stay no longer here ;  
God bless you all, both great and small,  
And send you a happy new year."

Our Lancashire readers know that a similar wish to that expressed in the two last lines is generally delivered, in recitative, at the close of each carol,—or before the singers abandon our doors ; which wish, however, we have heard finally changed into a less quotable ejaculation, in cases where the carolists had been allowed to sing unregarded.

The gradual decay into which these ancient religious ballads are rapidly falling, was, in some measure, repaired by Mr. Davies Gilbert, in 1823—who published a collection, containing upwards of twenty carols, in a restored state,—with the tunes to which it was usual to sing them, in the west of England. Of Welsh carols various collections are mentioned, both by Hone and by Sandys :—and in that country, the practice is in better preservation than even in England. In Ireland too, it exists to the present day,—although we have not met with any collection of Irish carols ; and in France,—where there are numerous collections under the title of *Noëls*,—the custom is universal. In Scotland, however, it was extinguished, with the other Christmas

practices, by the thunders of John Knox and his precisians,—and, we believe, has never been in any degree restored. We should add that there are numerous carols, for the Christmas season, scattered through the writings of our old poets,—amongst whom Herrick may be mentioned as conspicuous.

But the most ample and curious published collection of Christmas carols with which we have met is that by Mr. Sandys,—to which we have so often alluded :—and from the text of this collection, we will give our readers one or two specimens of the quaint beauties which occasionally mingle in the curious texture of these old anthems. Mr. Sandys's collection is divided into two parts ; the first of which consists of ancient carols and Christmas songs, from the early part of the fifteenth to the end of the seventeenth century. We wish that, in cases where the authorship belongs to so conspicuous a name as Herrick,—and, indeed, in all cases where it is ascertained,—the names of the authors had been prefixed. The second part comprises a selection from carols which the Editor states to be still used, in the west of England. We can inform him that many of these we have, ourselves, heard only some dozen years ago, screamed through the sharp evening air of Lancashire,—at the top pitch of voices that could, clearly, never have been given for any such purposes, “making night hideous,”—or, occasionally, filled the calm watches with the far lulling sounds of wild, sweet harmony. The practice, however, is, under any circumstances, full of fine meanings, that redeem the rudeness of performance,—and, for ourselves, we like the music, at its best and worst.

Of the festive songs we have already given occasional examples, in the progress of this work,—and shall just now confine ourselves to extracts from those of a more religious character. From the old part of the collections before us, we will give a verse of a short carol, which,—while it will exhibit, in a very modified degree, the familiar tone in which the writers of these ancient songs dealt with the incidents of the sacred story,—is full of a tenderness arising out of that very manner of treatment. We give it, in the literal form in which we find it in this collection—with the exception of extending an occasional cypher. It begins with a burthen :—

“A my dere son, sayd mary, a, my dere,  
Kys thi moder Jhesu with a lawghyng chere:”—

and continues :

“This endnes nyght I saw a syght  
all in my slepe,  
Mary that may she sang lullay  
and sore did wepe.  
To kepe she sawght full fast a bowte  
her son fro cold;  
Joseph seyde, wiff, my joy, my leff,  
say what ye wolde;  
No thyng my spouse is In this howse  
unto my pay :  
My son a kyng that made all thyng  
lyth in hay.

A my dere son.”

Some of these ancient carols run over the principal incidents in the scheme of man's fall and redemption; and we are sorry that our limits will not permit us to give such lengthened specimens as we should desire. We will, however, copy a few verses from one of a different kind—in which, beneath its ancient dress, our readers will see that there is much rude beauty. It begins:—

“I come from hevin to tell  
The best nowellis that ever be fell.—

But we must take it up further on:—

“My saull and lyfe, stand up and see  
Quha lyes in ane cribe of tree;  
Quhat babe is that so gude and faire?  
It is Christ, God's Sonne and Aire.

\* \* \* \* \*

O God that made all creature,  
How art thou becum so pure,  
That on the hay and straw will lye,  
Amang the asses, oxen, and kye?

And were the world ten tymes so wide,  
Cled ouer with gold and stanes of pride,  
Unworthy zit it were to thee,  
Under thy feet ane stule to bee.



The sylke and sandell, thee to eis,  
 Are hay and sempill sweiling clais,  
 Quhairin thow gloiris, greitest king,  
 As thow in heuin were in thy ring.

\* \* \* \* \*

O my deir hert, zoung Jesus sweet,  
 Prepare thy creddill in my spreit,  
 And I sall rock thee in my hert,  
 And neuer mair from thee depart."

The Star-song, in his collection, is, if our memory mislead us not, Herrick's, and taken from his "Noble Numbers." It begins:—

"Tell us, thou cleere and heavenly tongue,  
 Where is the babe but lately sprung?  
 Lies he the lillie-banks among?

Or say, if this new Birth of our's  
 Sleep, laid within some ark of flowers,  
 Spangled with deaw-light; thou canst cleere  
 All doubts, and manifest the where.

Declare to us, bright star, if we shall seek  
 Him in the morning's blushing cheek,  
 Or search the beds of spices through,  
 To find him out?"

The second part of Sandys's collection contains an imperfect version of a carol, of which we find a full and corrected copy in Mr. Hone's "Ancient Mysteries,"—formed by that author's collation of various copies, printed in different places. The beautiful verses which we quote are from Hone's version, and are wanting in that of Sandys. The ballad begins by elevating the Virgin Mary to a temporal rank, which must rest upon that particular authority, and is, probably, a new fact for our readers:—

"Joseph was an old man,  
 And an old man was he,  
 And he married Mary  
 Queen of Galilee;"—

which, for a carpenter, was certainly a distinguished alliance. It goes on to describe Joseph and his bride walking in a garden,—

“ Where the cherries they grew  
Upon every tree ;”

and upon Joseph's refusal, in somewhat rude language, to pull some of these cherries for Mary, on the ground of her supposed misconduct—

“ O ! then bespoke Jesus,  
All in his mother's womb,  
' Go to the tree, Mary,  
And it shall bow down ;

Go to the tree, Mary,  
And it shall bow to thee,  
And the highest branch of all  
Shall bow down to Mary's knee.' ”

And then, after describing Joseph's conviction and penitence, at this testimony to Mary's truth, occur the beautiful verses to which we alluded.

“ As Joseph was a walking,  
He heard an angel sing—  
' This night shall be born  
Our heavenly king.

He neither shall be born  
In housen, nor in hall,  
Nor in the place of Paradise,  
But in an ox's stall.

He neither shall be clothed  
In purple nor in pall,  
But all in fair linen,  
As were babies all.

He neither shall be rock'd  
In silver nor in gold,  
But in a wooden cradle,  
That rocks on the mould.

He neither shall be christen'd  
In white wine nor in red,  
But with the spring water  
With which we were christened.' ”

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The strange, wild ballad beginning—

“ I saw three ships come sailing in,  
     On Christmas day, on Christmas day ;  
 I saw three ships come sailing in,  
     On Christmas-day in the morning ;”—

and the still stranger one of “ The Holy Well,”—we would have copied at length, as examples of these curious relics, if we could have spared the space. Of the latter, however, we will give our readers some account, to show the singular liberties which were taken with sacred personages and things, in these old carols. In the one in question, the boy Jesus having asked his mother’s permission to go and play, receives it, accompanied with the salutary injunction—

“ And let me hear of no complaint  
     At night when you come home.

Sweet Jesus went down to yonder town,  
     As far as the Holy Well,  
 And there did see as fine children  
     As any tongue can tell.”

On preferring, however, his petition to these children—

“ Little children, shall I play with you,  
     And you shall play with me ?”—

he is refused, on the ground of his having been “ born in an ox’s stall ”—they being “ lords and ladies’ sons.”

“ Sweet Jesus turned him around,  
     And he neither laugh’d nor smil’d,  
 But the tears came trickling from his eyes,  
     Like water from the skies.”

Whereupon he returns home, to report his grievance to his mother :—who answers—

“ Though you are but a maiden’s child,  
     Born in an ox’s stall,  
 Thou art the Christ, the King of Heaven,  
     And the Saviour of them all ;”—

and then proceeds to give him advice, neither consistent with the assertion in the last line, nor becoming her character :—

“ Sweet Jesus, go down to yonder town,  
As far as the Holy Well,  
And take away those sinful souls,  
And dip them deep in hell.

Nay, nay, sweet Jesus said,  
Nay, nay, that may not be,  
For there are too many sinful souls,  
Crying out for the help of me.”

Both these latter carols are given by Sandys, as amongst those which are still popular in the west of England ; and we remember to have, ourselves, heard them both, many and many a time, in its northern counties.

We must give a single verse of one of the ancient French provincial Noël's—for the purpose of introducing our readers to a strange species of chanted burthen ; and then we must stop. It is directed to be sung, “ *sur un chant joyeux* ;” and begins thus :—

“ Quand Dieu naquit à Noël  
Dedans la Judée,  
On vit ce jour solennel  
La joie inondée ;  
Il n'étoit ni petit ni grand  
Qui n'apportât son présent,  
Et n'o, n'o, n'o, n'o,  
Et n'offrit, frit, frit,  
Et n'o, n'o, & n'offrit,  
Et n'offrit sans cesse Toute sa richesse.”

Our readers are, no doubt, aware that the carol-sheets still make their annual appearance at this season,—not only in the metropolis, but also in Manchester, Birmingham, and perhaps other towns. In London, they pass into the hands of hawkers ; who wander about our streets and suburbs, enforcing the sale thereof, by (in addition to the irresistible attraction of the woodcuts with which they are embellished) the further recommendation of their own versions and variations of the original tunes—yelled out in tones which could not be heard, without alarm, by

any animals throughout the entire range of nature, except the domesticated ones, who are "broken" to it. For ourselves, we confess that we are not thoroughly broken yet; and experience very uneasy sensations at the approach of one of these alarming choirs.

"Tis said that the lion will turn and flee,  
From a maid in the pride of her purity."

We would rather meet him under the protection of a group of London carol-singers. We would undertake to explore the entire of central Africa, well-provisioned, and in such company, without the slightest apprehension, excepting such as was suggested by the music itself.

By these gentry, a very spirited competition is kept up, in the article of annoyance, with the hurdy-gurdies, and other instruments of that class, which awaken the echoes of all our streets, —and furnish a sufficient refutation of the assertion that we are not a musical nation. We have heard it said, that the atmosphere of London is highly impregnated with coal-smoke and barrel-organs. The breath of ballad-singers should enter into the account, at this season.

A very curious part of the business, however, is, that these people actually expect to get money, for what they are doing! With the most perfect good faith, they really calculate upon making a profit, by their outrages upon men's feelings! It is for the purpose of "putting bread into their mouths," that those mouths are opened in that portentous manner. For ourselves, we have a strong conviction that the spread of the emigration mania has been greatly promoted by the increase of ballad-singers in the land. We have frequently resolved to emigrate, on that account, ourselves; and if we could be perfectly certified of any desirable colony, to which no removals had taken place, from the class in question, we believe we should no longer hesitate. The existence of that class is a grievous public wrong, and calls loudly for legislation. We have frequently thought that playing a hurdy-gurdy in the streets should be treated as a capital crime.

Of the annual sheets,—and of such other carols as may be recoverable, from traditional or other sources,—it is to be regretted

that more copious collections are not made, by the lovers of old customs, ere it be too late. Brand speaks of an hereditary collection of ballads, almost as numerous as the Pepysian collection, at Cambridge, which he saw, at Newcastle-upon-Tyne, in the printing-office of the late Mr. Saint,—amongst which were several carols for the Christmas season. Hone, in his “Ancient Mysteries,” gives a list of eighty-nine carols in his possession, all in present use (though likely soon to become obsolete), and exclusive of the modern compositions printed by religious societies, under the denomination of carols. He furnishes a curious proof of the attachment which the carol-buyers extend, from the old carols themselves, to the old rude cuts by which they are illustrated. “Some of these,” he says, “on a sheet of Christmas carols, in 1820, were so rude in execution, that I requested the publisher, Mr. T. Batchelar, of 115 Long Alley, Moorfields, to sell me the original blocks. I was a little surprised by his telling me that he was afraid it would be impossible to get any of the same kind cut again. When I proffered to get much better engraved, and give them to him in exchange for his old ones, he said, “Yes, but the better are not so good. I can get better myself: now these are old favorites, and better cuts will not please my customers so well.” We have before us several of the sheets for the present season, issued from the printing-office and toy warehouse of Mr. Pitts, in the Seven Dials; and we grieve to say that, for the most part, they show a lamentable improvement in the embellishments,—and an equally lamentable falling-off in the literary contents. One of these sheets, however, which bears the heading title of “Divine Mirth,” contains some of the *old* carols,—and is adorned with impressions from cuts, rude enough, we should think, to please even the customers of Mr. Batchelar.

Amongst the musical signs of the season, we must not omit to place that once important gentleman, the bellman; who was anciently accustomed, as our excellent friend, Mr. Hone, says, at this time, “to make frequent nocturnal rambles, and proclaim all tidings which it seemed fitting to him that people should be awakened out of their sleep to hearken to.” From that ancient collection “The Bellman’s Treasury,”—which was once this now-decayed officer’s Vade Mecum,—we shall have occasion to extract, here


and there, in their proper places, the announcements by which, of old, he broke in upon the stillness of the several nights of this period. In the meantime, our readers may take the following example of Bell-man verses,—written by Herrick, and which we extract from his “Hesperides.”

“ From noise of scare-fires rest ye free,  
From murders Benedicite ;  
From all mischances that may fright  
Your pleasing slumbers in the night ;  
Mercie secure ye all, and keep  
The goblin from you while ye sleep.  
Past one a'clock, and almost two,  
My masters all, ‘ Good day to you.’ ”

The bell of this ancient officer may still be heard, at the midnight hour of Christmas Eve (and perhaps on other nights), in the different parishes of London, performing the overture to a species of recitative, in which he sets forth (amongst other things) the virtues of his patrons (dwelling on their liberality), and offers them all the good wishes of the season. The printed papers containing the matter of these recitations he has been busy circulating amongst the parishioners, for some time ; and, on the strength thereof, presents himself as a candidate for some expression of their good-will in return,—which, however, he expects should be given in a more profitable form. These papers, like the carol-sheets, have their margins adorned with wood-cuts, after scriptural subjects. One of them now lies before us ; and we grieve to say, that the quaint ancient rhymes are therein substituted by meagre modern inventions,—and the wood-cuts exhibit a most ambitious pretension to be considered as specimens of improved art. There is a copy of Carlo Dolce’s “ Last Supper ” at the foot.

The beadle of to-day is, in most respects, changed for the worse, from the bellman of old. Still, we are glad to hear his bell—which sounds much as it must have done of yore—lifting up its ancient voice amongst its fellows, at this high and general season of bells and bob-majors.

## THE CHRISTMAS DAYS.



HAVING given our readers an historical and general account of this ancient festival,—and a particular explanation of some of the principal tokens which, in modern times, as of old, bespeak the coming of its more high and ceremonious days,—we must now proceed to furnish them with a more peculiar description of those individual days themselves; confining ourselves as nearly as completeness of view will admit, within the limits which bound what is, in its most especial and emphatic sense, the Christmas season. In order, however, to attain this completeness of view, it has been necessary to allow ourselves certain points, lying, on both sides, *without* those strict boundaries;—and the selection which we have made includes the two conditions of giving us latitude enough for our purpose, and keeping reasonably close to the heart of the subject, at the same time. The reasons for this particular selection will more fully appear, in the accounts which we have to give of the individual days on which that selection has fallen,—and in the further remarks which we have to make, generally, on that portion of the year which we place under the presidency of

OUR LORD OF MISRULE.



## ST. THOMAS'S DAY.

21ST DECEMBER.

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THIS day—which is dedicated to the apostle St. Thomas—we have chosen as the opening of the Christmas festivities ; because it is that on which we first seem to get positive evidence of the presence of the old gentleman,—and see the spirit of hospitality and benevolence, which his coming creates, brought into active operation. Of the manner in which this spirit exhibits itself in the metropolis, we are about, presently, to speak :—but must previously notice that, in many of the rural districts of England, there are still lingering traces of ancient customs, which meet at this particular point of time, and under the sanction of that same spirit. These practices, however various in their kinds, are, for the most part, relics, in different shapes, of the old mummeries which we shall have to discuss at length, in the course of the present chapter ;—and are but so many distinct forms in which the poor man's appeal is made to the rich man's charity, for a share in the good things of this merry festival.

Amongst these ancient customs, may be mentioned the practice of “going a gooding,” which exists in some parts of Kent ; and is performed by women, who present sprigs of evergreen and Christmas flowers, and beg for money in return. We believe the term “going a gooding,” scarcely requires illustration. It means, simply, going about to wish “good even,”—as, according to Nares, “fully appears from this passage in *Romeo and Juliet* :—

Nurse. God ye good morrow, gentlemen,
Mercutio. God ye good den, fair gentlewoman.’ ”

In this same county, St. Thomas's Day is likewise known by the name of "Doleing Day," on account of the distribution of the bounty of different charitable individuals. This word "dole" is explained, by Nares, to mean, "a share or lot in anything distributed," and to come from the verb to deal. He quotes Shakespeare for this also :—

" It was your presumise
That in the *dole* of blows your son might drop."

The musical procession, known in the Isle of Thanet, and other parts of the same county, by the name of "hodening" (supposed by some to be an ancient relic of a festival ordained to commemorate the landing of our Saxon ancestors, in that island,—and which, in its form, is neither more nor less than a modification of the old practice of the "hobby horse"), is, to this day, another of the customs of this particular period.

A custom analogous to these is still to be traced in Warwickshire ;—throughout which county it seems to have been the practice of the poor to go from door to door of every house, "with a bag, to beg corn of the farmers, which they call going a corning." And in Herefordshire, a similar custom exists,—where this day is called "Mumping Day,"—that is, begging day.

To the same spirit we owe the Hagmena, or Hogmanay practice, still in use in Scotland—as well as that of the Wren Boys, in Ireland (both of which will be described hereafter), although their observance belongs to later days of the season,—and probably many others which will variously suggest themselves to our various readers, as existing in their several neighborhoods.

In the great metropolis of England,—where poverty and wretchedness exist in masses upon which private benevolence cannot efficiently act, and where imposture assumes their forms in a degree that baffles the charity of individuals,—the bequests of our ancestors have been, to a great extent, placed, for distribution, in the hands of the various parish authorities. St. Thomas's day, in London, therefore, is connected with these charities, by its being that on which some of the most important parochial proceedings take place ; and amongst these, are the wardmotes held on this day, for the election, by the freemen inhabitant householders, of

the members of the Common Council, and other officers of the respective city wards.

The civil government of the City of London is said to bear a general resemblance to the legislative power of the empire :—the Lord Mayor exercising the functions of monarchy, the Aldermen those of the peerage, and the Common Council those of the legislature. The principle difference is, that the Lord Mayor himself has no negative. The laws for the internal regulation of the City are wholly framed by these officers, acting in Common Council.—A Common-Council-man is, therefore, a personage of no mean importance.

Loving Christmas and its ceremonies with antiquarian veneration, we must profess likewise our profound respect for wards of such high sounding names as Dowgate, and Candlewick, and Cripplegate, and Vintry, and Portsoken,—the last of which, be it spoken with due courtesy, has always reminded us of an Alderman's nose ;—and for such distinguished callings as those of Cordwainers, and Lorimers, and Felt makers, and Fishmongers, and Plasterers, and Vintners, and Barbers,—each of whom we behold, in perspective, transformed into what Theodore Hook calls “a splendid annual,”—or, in less figurative language, Lord Mayor of London !—There is a pantomimic magic in the word, since the memorable days of Whittington. But to our theme.—

Pepys, the gossiping secretary of the Admiralty, records, in his curious diary, his having gone, on Saint Thomas's-day (21st December, 1663), “to Shoe Lane, to see a cocke-fighting, at the new pit there, a spot,” he adds, “I was never at it in my life : but, Lord ! to see the strange variety of people, from parliament-man (by name Wildes, that was deputy governor of the Tower, when Robinson was lord mayor), to the poorest 'prentices, bakers, brewers, butchers, draymen, and what not ; and all these fellows, one with another, cursing and betting. I soon had enough of it. It is strange to see how people of this poor rank, that look as if they had not bread to put into their mouths, shall bet three or four pounds at a time, and lose it, and yet as much the next battle, so that one of them will lose £10 or £20 at a meeting.”

Now the cock-fighting of our times, under the immediate patronage of Saint Thomas, and those of Pepys's, differ little, except

in the character of the combatants. In his (comparatively speaking) barbarous days, it was sufficient to pit two birds, one against the other, to excite the public, or amuse the spectators. But a purer taste prevails among the present citizens of London; for our modern "fighting-cocks," as the candidates for civic honors are called, seem on this day to be fully occupied with the morning exhibition of their own foul tongues,—and bets often run as high as parties, on these occasions.

"Saint Thomas's birds,"—another name for these civic fighting-cocks,—have been trained in various ale-house associations, such as the "Ancient and honorable Lumber Troop,"—the venerable "Society of Codgers,"—"the free and easy Johns,"—the "Councillors under the Cauliflower," and other well-known clubs; where politics,—foreign and domestic,—night after night are discussed, and mingle with the smoke of tobacco, inhaled through respectable clay pipes, and washed down with nips full of amber ale, or quarts of frothy-headed porter. Indeed the qualification for admission into the Lumber Troop is, we have been told, the power of consuming a quart of porter at a draught, without once pausing to draw breath,—which must be performed before that august assembly. We once visited the head-quarters of this porter-quaffing troop; and found the house, with some difficulty, near Gough Square,—which lies in that intricate region between Holborn Hill and Fleet Street. It was a corner house; and an inscription upon the wall, in letters of gold, informed the passenger that this was the place of meeting of the Lumber Troop. The room in which they met is small, dark, and ancient in appearance; with an old-fashioned chimney-piece in the centre, and a dais or raised floor at one end,—where, we presume, the officers of the troop take their seats. Above their heads, upon a shelf, some small brass cannon were placed as ornaments; and the walls of the room were decorated with the portraits of distinguished troopers,—among whom Mr. Alderman Wood, in a scarlet robe, and Mr. Richard Taylor, were pointed out to our notice. Over the fire-place hung the portrait of an old gentleman, in the warlike costume of Cromwell's time, who was, probably,

The obscurity which conceals the origin of many interesting and important institutions hangs over the early history of the Lumber Troop. Tradition asserts that, when Henry VIII. went to the siege of Boulogne, he drained the country of all its soldiers; and the citizens of London who remained behind, inspired with martial ardor, formed themselves into a troop, for the protection of old England. In the grotesque and gouty appearance of these troopers, their name of the Lumber Troop is said to have originated. Their field-days, as may be expected, were exhibitions of merriment; and their guards and midnight watches scenes of feasting and revelry. The "Lumber-pye" was formerly a dish in much repute,—being composed of high-seasoned meats and savory ingredients, for the preparation of which receipts may be found in the old cookery books. Recently, it has been corrupted into Lombard Pie, on account, as is said, of its Italian origin;—but we profess allegiance to the more ancient name.

Let those who hold lightly the dignity of a Lumber Trooper,—and who perhaps have smiled at the details here given,—inquire of the representatives of the city of London, in the parliament of England, their opinion of the matter. We have been assured that these jolly troopers influence every city election to such an extent that, without an understanding with these worthies, no candidate can have a chance of success. In the same way, the codgers, in Codger's Hall, Bride Lane (said to have been "instituted in 1756, by some of the people of the Inner Temple,—who imagined their free thoughts and profound cogitations worthy of attention, and charged half-a-crown for the *entrée*), and other ale-house clubs, exert their more limited power. Hone, in his *Every-Day Book*, observes that "these societies are under currents that set in strong; and often turn the tide of an election in favor of some 'good fellow,' who is good nowhere but in 'sot's-hole.'" And he adds, commenting upon St. Thomas's-day, "Now the 'gentlemen of the inquest,' chosen 'at the church' in the morning, dine together, as the first important duty of their office; and the re-elected ward-beadles are busy with the fresh chosen constables; and the watchmen [this was before the days of the police] are particularly civil to every 'drunken gentleman' who happens to look like one of the new authorities. And now

the bellman, who revives the history and poetry of his predecessors, will vociferate—

‘My masters all, this is St. Thomas’s-day,
And Christmas now can’t be far off, you’ll say.
And when you to the Ward-motes do repair,
I hope such good men will be chosen there,
As constables for the ensuing year,
As will not grudge the watchmen good strong beer.’ ”

We may observe, here, that St. Thomas’s Day is commonly called the shortest of the year,—although the difference between its length and that of the twenty-second is not perceptible. The hours of the sun’s rising and setting, on each of those days, are marked as the same in our calendar,—and the latter is, sometimes, spoken of as the shortest day.

As the days which intervene between this and the Eve of Christmas are distinguished by no special ceremonial of their own,—and as the numerous observances attached to several of the particular days which follow, will sufficiently prolong those parts of our subject,—we will take this opportunity of alluding to some of the sports and festivities not peculiar to any one day, but extending, more or less generally, over the entire season.

Burton, in his “Anatomy of Melancholy,” mentions, as the winter amusements of his day,—“Cardes, tables and dice, shovel-board, chesse-play, the philosopher’s game, small trunks, shuttle-cocke, billiards, musicke, masks, singing, dancing, ule-games, frolicks, jests, riddles, catches, purposes, questions and commands, merry tales of errant knights, queenes, lovers, lords, ladies, giants, dwarfes, theeves, cheaters, witches, fayries, goblins, friers,” &c. Amongst the list of Christmas sports, we elsewhere find mention of “jugglers, and jack-puddings, scrambling for nuts and apples, dancing the hobby-horse, hunting owls and squirrels, the fool-plough, hot-cockles, a stick moving on a pivot, with an apple at one end and a candle at the other, so that he who missed his bite burned his nose, blindman’s buffs, forfeits, interludes and mock plays:”—also of “thread my needle, Nan,” “he can do little that can’t do this,” feed the dove, hunt the slipper, shoeing the wild mare, post and pair, snap dragon, the gathering of omens,—

and a great variety of others. In this long enumeration, our readers will recognize many which have come down to the present day,—and form, still, the amusement of their winter evenings, at the Christmas-tide, or on the merry night of Halloween. For an account of many of those which are no longer to be found in the list of holiday games, we must refer such of our readers as it may interest to Brand's "Popular Antiquities," and Strutt's "English Sports." A description of them would be out of place in this volume; and we have mentioned them, only as confirming a remark which we have elsewhere made; viz.—that, in addition to such recreations as arise out of the season, or belong to it in a special sense,—whatever other games or amusements have, at any time, been of popular use, have generally inserted themselves into this lengthened and joyous festival; and that all the forms in which mirth or happiness habitually sought expression, congregated, from all quarters, at the ringing of the Christmas bells.

To the Tregetours, or jugglers, who anciently made mirth at the Christmas fire-side, there are several allusions in Chaucer's tales; and Aubrey, in reference thereto, mentions some of the tricks by which they contributed to the entertainments of the season. The exhibitions of such gentry, in modern times, are generally of a more public kind,—and it is rarely that they find their way to our fire-sides. But we have, still, the galantee-showman, wandering up and down our streets and squares—with his musical prelude and tempting announcement, sounding through the sharp evening air,—and summoned into our warm rooms, to display the shadowy marvels of his mysterious box, to the young group who gaze, in great wonder and some awe, from their inspiring places by the cheerful hearth.

Not that our fire-sides are altogether without domestic fortune-tellers, or amateur practitioners in the art of sleight-of-hand. But the prophecies of the former are drawn from—and the feats of the other performed with—the cards. Indeed we must not omit to particularize cards, as furnishing, in all their uses, one of their great resources, at this season of long evenings and in-door amusements,—as they appear, also, to have formed an express feature of the Christmas entertainments of all ranks of people, in old times. We are told that the squire, of three hundred a-year,

in Queen Anne's time "never played at cards, but at Christmas, when the family pack was produced from the mantel-piece:"—and Stevenson, an old writer of Charles the Second's time, in an enumeration of the preparations making for the mirth of the season, tells us that "the country-maid leaves half her market, and must be sent again, if she forgets a pack of cards on Christmas Eve." And who of us all has not shared in the uproarious mirth which young and unclouded spirits find, amid the intrigues and speculations of a round game! To the over-scrupulous, on religious grounds, who, looking upon cards as the "devil's books"—and to the moral alarmist, who, considering card-playing to be in itself gaming—would, each, object to this species of recreation for the young and innocent,—it may be interesting to know that the practice has been defended by that bishop of bishops, Jeremy Taylor, himself,—and that he insists upon no argument against the innocence of a practice being inferred from its abuse.

We have, before, alluded to the bards and harpers, who assembled, in ancient days, at this time of wassail;—making the old halls to echo to the voice of music,—and stirring the blood with the legends of chivalry, or chilling it with the wizard tale. And the tale and the song are amongst the spirits that wait on Christmas still, and charm the long winter evenings with their yet undiminished spells. Many a Christmas evening has flown over our heads on the wings of music sweeter, far sweeter,—dearer, a thousand times dearer—than ever was played by wandering minstrel or uttered by stipendiary bard;—and we have formed a portion of happy groups, when some thrilling story has sent a chain of sympathetic feeling through hearts that shall beat in unison no more;—and tales of the grave and its tenants have sent a paleness into cheeks, that the grave itself hath since made paler still.

The winter hearth is the very land of gossipred. There it is that superstition loves to tell her marvels, and curiosity to gather them. The gloom and desolation without,—with the wild unearthly voice of the blast, as it sweeps over a waste of snows, and cuts sharp against the leafless branches—or the wan sepulchral light that shows the dreary earth, as it were, covered with a pall, and the trees like spectres rising from beneath it,—alike send men

huddling round the blazing fire ; and awaken those impressions of the wild and shadowy and unsubstantial, to which tales of marvel, or of terror, are such welcome food. But other inspirations are born of the blaze itself ; and the jest, and the laugh, and the merry narration, are of the spirits that are raised within the magic circles that surround it.—

“ They should have drawn thee by the high heap’t hearth,
 Old Winter ! seated in thy great armed-chair,
 Watching the children at their Christmas mirth ;
 Or circled by them, as thy lips declare
 Some merry jest, or tale of murder dire,
 Or troubled spirit that disturbs the night ;
 Pausing at times to move the languid fire,
 Or taste the old October, brown and bright.”

The song and the story, the recitation and the book read aloud, are, in town and in village, mansion and farmhouse—amongst the universal resources of the winter nights, now,—as they, or their equivalents, have, at all times, been. The narratives of “old adventures, and valiaunces of noble knights, in times past,”—the stories of Sir Bevyys of Southampton and Sir Guy of Warwick, of Adam Bell, Clymme of the Clough, and William of Cloudesley—with other ancient romances or historical rhymes, which formed the recreation of the common people at their Christmas dinners and bride-ales, long ago, may have made way for the wild legend of the sea, or fearful anecdote

“ Of horrid apparition, tall and ghastly,
 That walks at dead of night—or takes its stand
 O’er some new opened grave, and, strange to tell,
 Evanishes at crowing of the cock ;”

and for the more touching ballads which sing of the late repentance of the cruel Barbara Allan,—

“ O mither, mither, mak my bed,
 O mak it saft and narrow ;
 Since my love died for me to-day,
 I’ll die for him to-morrow ;”—

or, how the

“ Pretty babes, with hand in hand,
Went wandering up and down ;
But never more could see the man,
Returning from the town,”—

or how “ there came a ghost to Margaret’s door,” and chilled the life-blood in her veins, by his awful announcement,

“ My bones are buried in a kirk-yard,
Afar beyond the sea ;
And it is but my sprite, Marg’ret,
That’s speaking now to thee ;

or may have been replaced, in high quarters, by the improved narrative literature of the present day, and the traditions or memories which haunt all homes. But the spirit of the entertainment, itself, is still the same, varied only by circumstances in its forms.

Whatever may be said for the ancient ghost stories, which are fast losing ground,—fitting it is that, amid the mirth of this pleasant time, such thoughts should be occasionally stirred, and those phantoms of the heart brought back !—not that the joy of the young and hopeful should be thereby darkened,—but that they may be duly warned that “ youth’s a stuff will not endure,” and taught, in time, the tenure upon which hope is held. That was a beautiful custom of the Jews which led them, when they built houses, to leave ever some part unfinished, as a memento of the ruin and desolation of their city. Not that they, therefore, built the less,—or the less cheerfully ; but that, in the very midst of their amplest accommodations, they preserved a perpetual and salutary reference to the evil of their condition—a useful check upon their worldly thoughts. And thus should mirth be welcomed, and hopes built up, wherever the materials present themselves ; but a mark should, notwithstanding, be placed upon the brightest of them all—remembrancers ever let in,—which may recall to us the imperfect condition of our nature here, and speak of the certain decay which must attend all hopes erected for mere earthly dwellings.

But *thou* shouldst speak of this—thou for whom the following lines were written long ago, though they have not, yet, met thine

eye—thou who hast learnt this lesson more sternly than even I, and speakest so well of *all* things! Many a “Winter’s Tale” have we two read together (Shakspeare’s among the rest—and how often!)—and many a written lay has linked our thoughts in a sympathy of sentiment, on many an evening of Christmas. It may be that on some night of that which is approaching, these lines may meet thy notice,—and through them, *one more* winter’s eve may, yet, be spent by thee and me, in a communion of thought and feeling. No fear that joy should carry it all, with us! No danger that the ghosts of the past should fail to mingle with our Christmas feelings, in that hour! There can be no future hope built up for thee or me,—or for most others who have passed the first season of youth—to which something shall not be wanting;—which shall not, like the houses of the Jews, be left imperfect in some part; and for the same reason,—even for the memories of the ruined past!—

Farewell!—I do not bid thee weep,—
 The hoarded love of many years,
 The visions hearts like thine must keep,
 May not be told by tears!
 No! tears are but the spirit’s showers,
 To wash its *lighter* clouds away,
 In breasts where sun-bows, like the flowers,
 Are born of rain and ray;
 But gone from thine is all the glow
 That helped to form life’s promise-bow!

Farewell!—I know that never more
 Thy spirit, like the bird of day,
 Upon its own sweet song, shall soar
 Along a sunny way!—
 The hour that wakes the waterfall
 To music, in its far-off flight,
 And hears the silver fountains call,
 Like angels through the night,
 Shall bring thee songs whose tones ~~are~~ sighs,
 From harps whose chords are memories!

Night!—when, like perfumes that have slept,
 All day, within the wild-flower’s heart,
 Steal out the thoughts the soul has kept
 In silence and apart;
 And voices we have pined to hear,

Through many a long and lonely day,
Come back upon the dreaming ear,
From grave-lands, far away ;
And gleams look forth, of spirit-eyes,
Like stars along the darkening skies !
When fancy and the lark are still—
Those riders of the morning gale !
And walks the moon o'er vale and hill,
With memory and the nightingale ;—
The moon that is the daylight's ghost
(As memory is the ghost of hope),
And holds a lamp to all things lost
Beneath night's solemn cope,
Pale as the light by memory led
Along the cities of the dead !

Alas, for thee ! alas for thine !
Thy youth that is no longer young !
Whose heart, like Delphi's ruined shrine,
Gives oracles—oh ! still divine !—
But never more in song !
Whose breast, like Echo's haunted hall,
Is filled with murmurs of *the past*,
Ere yet its "gold was dim," and all
Its "pleasant things" laid waste !
From whose sweet windows never more
Shall look the sunny soul of yore !

Farewell !—I do not bid thee weep,—
The smile and tear are past for thee ;
The river of thy thoughts must keep
Its solemn course, too still and deep
For idle eyes to see !
Oh ! earthly things are all too far
To throw their shadows o'er its stream !—
But, now and then, a silver star,
And, now and then, a gleam
Of glory from the skies be given,
To light its waves with dreams of heaven !

To the out-door sports of this merry time, which arise out of the natural phenomena of the season itself, we need do no more than allude here,—because every school-boy knows far more about them than we are now able to tell him—though we too reckoned them all amidst the delights of our boyhood. The rapid

motions and graceful manœuvres of the skilful amongst the skaters—the active games connected with this exercise (such as the Golf of our northern neighbors, not very commonly practised in England)—the merry accidents of the sliders—and the loud and mischievous laugh of the joyous groups of snow-ballers—are all common amongst the picturesque features by which the Christmas time is commonly marked, in these islands. To be sure, the kind of seasons seems altogether to have abandoned us in which the ice furnished a field for those diversions, during a period of six weeks ;—and the days are gone when fairs were held on the broad Thames, and books were printed and medals struck on the very pathway of his fierce and daily tides. Even now, as we write, however, in this present year of grace, old Winter stands without the door, in something like the garb in which as boys we loved him best, and that old aspect of which we have such pleasant memories—and which Cowper has so well described :—

“O ! Winter ! ruler of the inverted year !
Thy scattered hair with sleet-like ashes filled ;
Thy breath congealed upon thy lips ; thy cheeks
Fringed with a beard made white with other snows
Than those of age ; thy forehead wrapt in clouds :
A leafless branch thy sceptre ; and thy throne
A sliding car indebted to no wheels,
But urged by storms along thy slippery way !”

In looking over a description of London, we have met with a quotation of a passage from Fitz Stephen, an old historian of that city ; in which he gives a quaint description of these familiar sports, as they were practised in King Henry the Second's day, on the large pond or marsh which then occupied the site of what is, now, Moorfields. The passage is short, and we will quote it.

“When that vast lake,” he says, “which waters the walls of the city, towards the north, is hard frozen, the youth, in great numbers, go and divert themselves on the ice ; some taking a small run for the increment of velocity, place their feet at a proper distance, and are carried, sliding, sideways a great way. Others will take a large cake of ice, and seating one of their companions upon it, they take hold of one another's hands, and

draw him along ; when it happens that, moving so swiftly on so slippery a place, they all fall headlong. Others there are, who are still more expert in these amusements on the ice ; they place certain bones, the leg bones of animals, under the soles of their feet, by tying them round their ankles ; and then, taking a pole, shod with iron, into their hands, they push themselves forward by striking it against the ice ; and are carried on with a velocity equal to the flight of a bird, or a bolt discharged from a cross-bow."

But amongst all the amusements which, in cities, contribute to make the Christmas time a period of enchantments for the young and happy, there is another, which must not be passed over without a word of special notice ; and that one is the theatre—a world of enchantment in itself. We verily believe that no man ever forgets the night on which, as a boy, he first witnessed the representation of a play. All sights and sounds that reached his senses before the withdrawing of the mysterious curtain,—all things which preceded his introduction to that land of marvels which lies beyond—are mingled inextricably with the memories of that night, and haunt him through many an after year. The very smell of the lamps and orange-peel, the discordant cries, the ringing of the prompter's bell, and above all, the heavy dark green curtain itself, become essential parts of the charm in which his spirit is long after held. It was so with ourselves ;—and though many a year is gone by since that happy hour of our lives, and most of the spells which were then cast have been long since broken, yet we felt another taken from us when, at Drury Lane, an attempt was made to substitute a rich curtain of crimson and gold, for the plain dark fall of green. And then the overture ! the enchanting prelude to all the wonders that await us !—the unearthly music leading us into fairy land ! the incantation, at whose voice, apparently, the mysterious veil on which our eyes have been so long and so earnestly riveted, rises, as if by its own act, and reveals to us the mysteries of an enchanted world. From that moment, all things that lie on this side the charmed boundary are lost sight of ;—and all the wonders that are going on beyond it are looked on with the most undoubting faith. It is not, for a moment, suspected that the actors therein are beings of natures like ourselves,—nor is there any questioning but that we

are gazing upon scenes and doings separated from the realities of life. Verily do we believe that, never again in this life, are so many new and bewildering and bewitching feelings awakened in his breast, as on the first night in which the boy is spectator of a theatrical performance,—if he be old enough to enjoy, and not quite old enough clearly to understand what is going on.

At this holiday period of the year, the boxes of our theatres are filled with the happy faces, and their walls ring with the sweet laughter, of children. All things are matters of amazement and subjects of exclamation. But in London, above all things,—far, far beyond all other things (though it does not begin for some days later than this), is the Pantomime, with its gorgeous scenery, and incomprehensible transformations and ineffable fun. “Ready to leap out of the box,” says Leigh Hunt, “they joy in the mischief of the clown, laugh at the thwacks he gets for his meddling, and feel no small portion of contempt for his ignorance, in not knowing that hot water will scald, and gunpowder explode; while with head aside to give fresh energy to the strokes, they ring their little palms against each other, in testimony of exuberant delight.” The winter pantomimes are introduced on the evening next after Christmas night; and some account of this entertainment seems, as a feature of the season, due to our Christmas readers.

From Italy, then, we appear to have derived our pantomime—the legitimate drama of Christmas: and to pagan times and deities the origin of our pantomimical characters may be directly referred. The nimble harlequin of the stage is the Mercury of the ancients, and in his magic wand and charmed cap may be recognized that god’s caduceus and petasus. Our columbine is Psyche, our clown Momus, and our Pantaloon is conjectured to be the modern representative of Charon,—variously habited, indeed, according to Venetian fancy and feelings. Even Punch, the friend of our childhood,—the great-headed, long-nosed, hump-backed “Mister Punch,” it seems, was known to the Romans, under the name of Maccus.

Our pantomime, however, is an inferior translation, rather than a good copy, from its Italian original. The rich humor, the ready wit, the exquisite raciness of the Italian performance, have all evaporated,—and with us, are burlesqued by the vapid joke,

the stale trick, and acts of low buffoonery. We read of the pantomimic actors Constantini and Cecchini being ennobled :—of Louis XIII. patronizing the merits of Nicholas Barbieri, and raising him to fortune ;—that Tiberio Fiurilli, the inventor of the character of Scaramouch, was the early companion of Louis XIV. ;—and that the wit of the Harlequin Dominic made him a favored guest at the same monarch's table. These instances of distinction are alone sufficient proof of the superior refinement of the actors of Italian pantomime, above our vulgar tribe of tumblers. The Italian artists were fellows “ of infinite jest,”—whose ready wit enabled them to support extempore dialogue, suiting “ the action to the word, and the word to the action ;”—for the Arlequino of Italy was not a mute, like his English representative. Many of the Italian harlequins were authors of considerable reputation ; Ruzzante, who flourished about 1530, may be regarded as the Shakspeare of pantomime. “ Till his time,” says D'Israeli, “ they had servilely copied the duped fathers, the wild sons, and the tricking valets of Plautus and Terence ; and perhaps not being writers of sufficient skill, but of some invention, were satisfied to sketch the plots of dramas, boldly trusting to extempore acting and dialogue. Ruzzante peopled the Italian stage with a fresh enlivening crowd of pantomimic characters. The insipid dotards of the ancient comedy were transformed into the Venetian Pantaloon, and the Bolognese Doctor ; while the hare-brained fellow, the arch-knave, and the booby, were furnished from Milan, Bergamo, and Calabria. He gave his newly created beings new language, and a new dress. From Plautus, he appears to have taken the hint of introducing all the Italian dialects into one comedy, by making each character use his own ; and even the modern Greek,—which, it seems, afforded many an unexpected play on words for the Italian. This new kind of pleasure, like the language of Babel, charmed the national ear ; every province would have its dialect introduced on the scene, which often served the purpose both of recreation and a little innocent malice. Their masks and dresses were furnished by the grotesque masqueraders of the Carnival,—which, doubtless, often contributed many scenes and humors to the quick and fanciful genius of Ruzzante.”

To the interesting essay, by the author of the "Curiosities of Literature," from whence this extract is derived, we beg leave to refer the reader, for an anecdotal history of pantomime. Mr. D'Israeli, in conclusion, observes, that "in gesticulation and humor, our Rich appears to have been a complete mine : his genius was entirely confined to pantomime ; and he had the glory of introducing Harlequin on the English stage,—which he played under the feigned name of Lun. He could describe to the audience by his signs and gestures, as intelligibly as others could express by words. There is a large caricature print of the triumph which Rich had obtained over the severe muses of tragedy and comedy, which lasted too long not to excite jealousy and opposition from the *corps dramatique*.

"Garrick, who once introduced a speaking Harlequin, has celebrated the silent but powerful language of Rich :—

' When LUN appeared, with matchless art and whim,
He gave the power of speech to every limb,
Tho' mask'd and mute, convey'd his quick intent,
And told in frolic gestures what he meant :
But now, the motley coat and sword of wood
Require a tongue to make them understood ! "

Foote it was, we think, who attempted to get a standing for a Harlequin with a wooden leg, upon the English stage ; and though he was supported by a clown upon crutches, these and other efforts to effect a witty reform in the mechanism of an English pantomime proved unsuccessful. "Why is this burlesque race here," inquires Mr. D'Israeli, "privileged to cost so much, to do so little, and repeat that little so often ?" In 1827, according to a statement which we believe to be tolerably correct, the "getting up," as it is termed, of the pantomimes produced on the 26th of December, in London, cost at—

Covent Carden.....	£1,000
Drury Lane.....	1,000
Surrey.....	500
Adelphi.....	200
Olympic.....	150
Sadler's Wells.....	100
West London.....	100
<hr/>	
Making the total of.....	£3,050

and in other years, we believe, the cost has been considerably more ;—and yet this enormous expenditure left no impression on the popular memory,—mere stage-trick being far below the exhibition of a juggler. True it is, that clever artists have been, for many years, employed to design and paint the scenery of the pantomimes ; and, consequently, admirable pictures have been exhibited,—especially at the national theatres, where this feature, indeed, constitutes the main attraction of the evening's performance. The stupid tragedy of "George Barnwell," produced for the sake of the city apprentices, was formerly the usual prelude to the Christmas pantomime, on the night of St. Stephen's day. Hone, in his *Every Day Book*, has chronicled that "the representation of this tragedy was omitted, in the Christmas holidays of 1819, at both theatres, for the first time." To be sure, this dull affair answered the purpose as well as any other,—it being an established rule with the tenants of the theatrical Olympus, that nothing shall be heard, save their own thunders, previously to the pantomime, on St. Stephen's night. The most famous pantomime which has been played in our time is, unquestionably, *Mother Goose*. When it was produced, or to whom the authorship is ascribed, we know not ; but in 1808, it was revived, and played at the Haymarket, with an additional scene, representing the burning of Covent Garden Theatre. The pantomimes of the last thirty years have failed to effect a total eclipse of the brilliancy of "*Harlequin and Mother Goose, or the Golden Egg* ;" which found its way into the list of provincial stock-pieces.

Connected with this golden age of English pantomime, the recollection of Grimaldi—Joey Grimaldi, as the gallery folk delighted to call him—is an obvious association. His acting, like that of Liston, must have been seen to be understood or appreciated ; for no description can convey an adequate idea of the power of expression and gesture. They who have not seen Joey, may never hope to look upon his like ; and they who have seen him, must never expect to see his like again. On the English stage, never was clown like Grimaldi !—He was far more than a clown—he was a great comic actor. But his constitution soon gave way under the trials to which it was exposed. In the depth of winter, after performing at Sadler's Wells, he was brought down,

night after night, wrapped in blankets, to Covent Garden ; and there had for the second time in the course of the same evening, to go through the allotted series of grimaces, leaps, and tumbles. Poor Grimaldi, sunk by these exertions into a premature old age, was finally obliged to retire from the stage on the 27th of June, 1828 ;—and the Literary Gazette thus pleasantly, but feelingly, announced his intention :—

“ Our immense favorite, Grimaldi, under the severe pressure of years and infirmities, is enabled, through the good feeling and prompt liberality of Mr. Price, to take a benefit at Drury Lane on Friday next ;—the last of Joseph Grimaldi ! Drury’s—Covent Garden’s—Sadler’s—everybody’s Joe ! The friend of Harlequin and Farley-kin !—the town clown !—greatest of fools !—daintiest of motleys !—the true *ami des enfans* ! The tricks and changes of life—sadder, alas ! than those of pantomime—have made a dismal difference between the former flapping, filching, laughing, bounding antic, and the present Grimaldi. He has no spring in his foot—no mirth in his eye !—The corners of his mouth droop, mournfully, earthward ; and he stoops in the back, like the weariest of Time’s porters ! L’Allegro has done with him, and Il Penseroso claims him for his own ! It is said, besides, that his pockets are neither so large, nor so well stuffed, as they used to be on the stage : and it is hard to suppose fun without funds, or broad grins in narrow circumstances.”

The mummers, who still go about, at this season of the year, in some parts of England, are the last descendants of those masquers who, in former times (as we have shown at length), contributed to the celebrations of the season, at once amongst the highest and lowest classes of the land ; as their performances present, also, the last semblances of those ancient mysteries and moralities, by which the splendid pageantries of the court were preceded. Sir Walter Scott, in a note to “*Marmion*,” seems to intimate that these mummeries are, in fact, the offspring and relics of the old mysteries themselves. The fact, however, seems rather to be, that these exhibitions existed before the introduction of the Scripture plays ; and that the one and the other are separate forms of a practice, copied directly from the festival observances of the pagans. Accordingly, Brand speaks of a species of mumming

which "consists in changing clothes between men and women, who, when dressed in each other's habits, go from one neighbor's house to another, partaking of Christmas cheer, and making merry with them in disguise;"—and which practice he traces directly to the Roman *Sigillaria*. In various parts of the continent, also,—as in France and Germany,—certain forms of mumming long existed, which appear to have been originally borrowed from the rites of idolatry: and the Scottish *Guisars*, or *Guisarts*—if the very ingenious explanation of their hogmanay cry, given by Mr. Repp (and for which we refer our readers to vol. iv., part I., of *Archæologia Scotica*) be correct—connect themselves with the superstitions of the northern nations.

Amongst the forms of ancient mumming which have come down to the present, or recent times, we may observe that the hobby-horse formed, as late as the seventeenth century, a prominent character,—and that something of this kind seems still to exist. Dr. Plot, in his "*History of Staffordshire*," mentions a performance called the "*Hobby-horse Dance*," as having taken place, at Abbott's Bromley, during the Christmas season, within the memory of man;—and we have already shown that a modification of the same practice continues to the present day, or did to within a few years back, in the isle of Thanet. This dance is described Dr. Plot, as being composed by "a person who carried the image of a horse between his legs, made of thin boards, and in his hands a bow and arrow. The latter, passing through a hole in the bow, and stopping on a shoulder, made a snapping noise, when drawn to and fro, keeping time with the music. With this man danced six others, carrying on their shoulders as many rein-deer heads, with the arms of the chief families to whom the revenues of the town belonged. They danced the *heys* and other country dances. To the above Hobby-horse, there belonged a pot, which was kept by turns by the reeves of the town, who provided cakes and ale to put into this pot: all people who had any kindness for the good intent of the institution of the sport, giving pence a-piece for themselves and families. Foreigners, also, that came to see it, contributed; and the money, after defraying the expense of the cakes and ale, went to repair the church, and support the poor." A reason given by some, as the origin of

this practice, we have already stated in our mention of "hoden-ing,"—and our readers will see that its object, like that of the other similar observances of this season, was charity.

In some parts of the north of England, a custom exists, to the present time, which appears to be composed of the ancient Roman sword-dance—or, perhaps, the sword-dance of the northern nations—and lingering traces of the obsolete "Festival of Fools." This practice, which is called the "Fool Plough," consists in a pageant composed of "a number of sword-dancers, dragging a plough, with music, and one, sometimes two, in very strange attire;—the Bessy, in the grotesque habit of an old woman,—and the fool, almost covered with skins, a hairy cap on, and the tail of some animal hanging from his back. The office of one of these characters, in which he is very assiduous, is to go about, rattling a box amongst the spectators of the dance, in which he receives their little donations." Our readers will probably remember that a set of these mummers are introduced by Washington Irving, in his account of a Christmas spent in Yorkshire.

The old Christmas play of St. George and the Dragon is, still, amongst the popular amusements of this season, in many parts of England. Whether this particular kind of performance is to be considered as dating from the return of the Crusaders,—or that similar representations had existed previously, the characters of which alone were changed by that event, does not appear, from any other remains that have reached us. There is evidence, however, that plays founded upon the legend of St. George, are of a very remote date; and, in all probability, they were introduced not long after the age of the Crusades. From various contributors to Mr. Hone's "Every Day Book," we learn that versions of these plays are still performed, amongst the lower orders, at the Christmas tide, in the extreme western counties of England,—as also in Cumberland, and some others of the more northern ones:—and one of those correspondents, dating from Falkirk, gives an account of a play still performed by the Guisars, in some parts of Scotland, which is of similar construction, and evidently borrowed from the same source; but in which one Galgacus is substituted for St. George, as the hero of the piece,—and the drama is made, by that substitution, to commemorate the suc-

cessful battle of the Grampians, by the Scots, under that leader, against the invader Agricola. If Mr. Reddock be right in this opinion, Agricola is, for the nonce, elevated to the title of King of Macedon. The party who carries the bag for these mummers is a very questionable trustee,—being no other than Judas Iscariot. Sir Walter Scott, in his notes to *Marmion*, speaks of the same play, as one in which he and his companions were in the habit of taking parts, when boys; and mentions the characters of the old Scripture-plays having got mixed up with it, in the version familiar to him. He enumerates St. Peter, who carried the keys,—St. Paul, who was armed with a sword, and Judas, who had the bag, for contributions; and says that he believes there was also a St. George. It is not unlikely there might, though he is not mentioned by Mr. Reddock,—for the confusion of characters, in all these versions, is very great. In the Whitehaven edition, St. George is son to the King of Egypt, and the hero who carries all before him is Alexander. He conquers St. George and kills the King of Egypt. In fact, the legend, as it exists in the old romance of “*Sir Bevy's of Hampton*,” has everywhere been mixed up with extraneous matter; and scarcely any two sets of performers render it alike. The plot seems, in all, to be pretty nearly the same; and the doctor, with his marvellous cures and empirical gibberish, seems to be common to them all. “But so little,” says Sandys, “do the actors know the history of their own drama, that sometimes General Wolfe is introduced, who first fights St. George, and then sings a song about his own death. I have also seen the Duke of Wellington represented.” Mr. Reddock mentions that, during the war with France, one of the characters in his version “was made to say that he had been ‘fighting the French,’ and that the *loon* who took leg-bail was no less a personage than” the great Napoleon. Mr. Sandys mentions that, occasionally, there is a sort of anti-masque, or burlesque (if burlesque itself *can* be burlesqued) at the end of the performance; when some comic characters enter, called Hub Bub, Old Squire, &c.—and the piece concludes with a dance.—At other times, the performances are wound up by a song.

We may mention that we have in our possession an Irish version of the same play, as it is still played by the boys in that

country :—in which version, as might be expected, the Championship is given to St. Patrick, who asserts that St. George was nothing more than “St. Patrick’s boy,” and fed his horses. Another of the characters in this edition of the story is Oliver Cromwell,—who, after certain grandiloquent boastings (amongst others, that he had “conquered many notions with his copper nose”), calls upon no less a personage than Beelzebub, to step in, and confirm his assertions.

The costume and accoutrements of these mummers appear to be pretty generally of the same kind,—and, for the most part, to resemble those of morris-dancers. They are thus correctly described by Mr. Sandys. St. George, and the other tragic performers, wear “white trowsers and waistcoats, showing their shirt-sleeves, and are much decorated with ribbons and handkerchiefs,—each carrying a drawn sword in his hand, if they can be procured, otherwise a cudgel. They wear high caps of pasteboard, covered with fancy paper, adorned with beads, small pieces of looking-glass, bugles, &c.,—several long strips of pith generally hanging down from the top, with shreds of different colored cloth strung on them,—the whole having a fanciful and smart effect. The Turk, sometimes, has a turban. Father Christmas is personified as a grotesque old man, wearing a large mask and wig, with a huge club in his hand. The doctor,—who is a sort of merry-andrew to the piece,—is dressed in some ridiculous way, with a three-cornered hat and painted face. The female, when there is one, is in the costume of her great-grandmother. The hobby-horse, when introduced, has a sort of representation of a horse’s hide ; but the dragon and the giant, when there is one, frequently appear with the same style of dress as the knights.”

We will present our readers with the version of this old drama given by Mr. Sandys, as still performed in Cornwall. Elsewhere, we have met with some slight variations upon even this Cornwall piece ; but will be content to print it, as we find it in the collection in question. Our Lancashire readers will at once recognize its close resemblance to the play performed in that county, about the time of Easter, by the Peace-egggers, or Paste-egggers—of whom we shall speak, in their proper place, in a future volume.—

“ Enter the Turkish Knight.

Open your doors, and let me in,
I hope your favors I shall win ;
Whether I rise or whether I fall,
I'll do my best to please you all.
St. George is here, and swears he will come in,
And if he does, I know he'll pierce my skin.
If you will not believe what I do say,
Let Father Christmas come in—clear the way !

[Retires.

Enter Father Christmas.

Here come I, old Father Christmas,
Welcome, or welcome not,
I hope old Father Christmas
Will never be forgot.
I am not come here to laugh or to jeer,
But for a pocketful of money, and a skinful of beer.
If you will not believe what I do say,
Come in the King of Egypt—clear the way !

Enter the King of Egypt.

Here I, the King of Egypt, boldly do appear,
St. George ! St. George ! walk in, my only son and heir !
Walk in, my son, St. George, and boldly act thy part,
That all the people here may see thy wond'rous art.

Enter St. George.

Here come I, St. George,—from Britain did I spring,
I'll fight the Dragon bold, my wonders to begin.
I'll clip his wings, he shall not fly ;
I'll cut him down, or else I die.

Enter the Dragon.

Who's he that seeks the Dragon's blood,
And calls so angry, and so loud ?
That English dog, will he before me stand ?
I'll cut him down with my courageous hand.
With my long teeth and scurvy jaw,
Of such I'd break up half a score,
And stay my stomach, till I'd more.

[*St. George and the Dragon fight,—the latter is killed.*

Father Christmas.

Is there a doctor to be found
All ready, near at hand,

To cure a deep and deadly wound,
And make the champion stand?

Enter Doctor.

Oh! yes, there is a doctor to be found
All ready, near at hand,
To cure a deep and deadly wound,
And make the champion stand?

Fa. Chris. What can you cure?

Doctor. All sorts of diseases,
Whatever you pleases,
The phthisic, the palsy, and the gout;
If the devil's in, I'll blow him out.

Fa. Chris. What is your fee?

Doctor. Fifteen pound, it is my fee,
The money to lay down;
But, as 'tis such a rogue as thee,
I cure for ten pound.
I carry a little bottle of alicumpane,
Here, Jack, take a little of my flip flop,
Pour it down thy tip top,
Rise up and fight again.

[The Doctor performs his cure, the fight is renewed, and the Dragon again killed.]

Saint George.

Here am I, St. George,
That worthy champion bold!
And with my sword and spear
I won three crowns of gold!
I fought the fiery dragon,
And brought him to the slaughter;
By that I won fair Sabra,
The King of Egypt's daughter.
Where is the man, that now me will defy?
I'll cut his giblets full of holes, and make his buttons fly.

The Turkish Knight advances.

Here come I, the Turkish Knight,
Here come the Turkish land to fight!
I'll fight Saint George, who is my foe,
I'll make him yield, before I go;
He brags to such a high degree,
He thinks there's none can do the like of he.

Saint George.

Where is the Turk, that will before me stand?
 I'll cut him down with my courageous hand.

*[They fight, the Knight is overcome, and
 falls on one knee.]*

Turkish Knight.

Oh! pardon me, St. George! pardon of thee I crave,
 Oh! pardon me, this night, and I will be thy slave

Saint George.

No pardon shalt thou have, while I have foot to stand,
 So rise thee up again, and fight out sword in hand.

*[They fight again, and the Knight is killed; Father
 Christmas calls for the Doctor, with whom the same
 dialogue occurs as before, and the cure is performed.]*

Enter the Giant Turpin.

Here come I, the Giant! bold Turpin is my name,
 And all the nations round do tremble at my fame.
 Where'er I go, they tremble at my sight,
 No lord or champion long with me would fight.

Saint George.

Here's one that dares to look thee in the face,
 And soon will send thee to another place.

*[They fight, and the Giant is killed; medical aid is
 called in, as before, and the cure performed by the
 Doctor—who then, according to the stage direction,
 is given a basin of girdy grout, and a kick, and
 driven out.]*

Father Christmas.

Now, ladies and gentlemen, your sport is most ended.
 So prepare for the hat, which is highly commended.
 The hat it would speak, if it had but a tongue.
 Come throw in your money, and think it no wrong."

And these,—with the dance filling up the intervals, and enlivening the winter nights,—are amongst the sports and amusements which extend themselves over the Christmas season, and connect together its more special and characteristic observances.

CHRISTMAS EVE.

24TH DECEMBER.



“ Some say, that ever ’gainst that season comes
Wherein our Saviour’s birth is celebrated,
This bird of dawning singeth all night long :
And then, they say, no spirit dares stir abroad ;
The nights are wholesome ; then no planets strike,
No fairy takes, nor witch hath power to charm,
So hallow’d and so gracious is the time.”

HAMLET.

THE progress of the Christmas celebrations has, at length, brought us up to the immediate threshold of that high day, in honor of which they are all instituted; and, amid the crowd of festivities by which it is, on all sides, surrounded, the Christian heart makes a pause, to-night. Not that the Eve of Christmas is marked by an entire abstinence from that spirit of festival by which the rest of this season is distinguished,—nor that the joyous character of the event, on whose immediate verge it stands, requires that it should. No part of that season is more generally dedicated to the assembling of friends, than are the great day, itself, and the eve which ushers it in. Still, however, the feelings of rejoicing, which properly belong to the blessed occasion, are chastened by the immediate presence of the occasion itself; and touching traditions and beautiful superstitions have given an air of solemnity to the night, beneath whose influence the spirit of commemoration assumes a religious character, and takes a softened tone.

Before, however, touching upon the customs and ceremonies of the night,—or upon those natural superstitions which have hung themselves around its sacred watches,—we must take a glimpse at an out-of-door scene, which forms a curious-enough feature of

Christmas-eve—and is rather connected with the great festival of to-morrow, than with the hushed and expectant feelings which are the fitting moral condition of to-night.

Everywhere, throughout the British isles, Christmas-eve is marked by an increased activity about the good things of this life. "Now," says Stevenson, an old writer whom we have already quoted, for the customs of Charles the Second's time, "capons and hens, besides turkeys, geese, ducks, with beef and mutton, must all die ; for in twelve days, a multitude of people will not be fed a little ;"—and the preparations, in this respect, of this present period of grace, are made much after the ancient prescription of Stevenson. The abundant displays of every kind of edible, in the London markets, on Christmas-eve, with a view to the twelve days' festival, of which it is the overture—the blaze of lights amid which they are exhibited, and the evergreen decorations by which they are embowered—together with the crowds of idlers or of purchasers that wander through these well-stored magazines—present a picture of abundance, and a congress of faces, well worthy of a single visit from the stranger, to whom a London market, on the eve of Christmas, is, as yet, a novelty.

The approach of Christmas-eve, in the metropolis, is marked by the Smithfield show of over-fed cattle ; by the enormous beasts and birds, for the fattening of which medals and cups and prizes have been awarded by committees of amateur graziers and feeders ;—in honor of which monstrosities, dinners have been eaten, toasts drunk, and speeches made. These prodigious specimens of corpulency we behold, after being thus glorified, led like victims of antiquity, decked with ribands and other tokens of triumph—or perhaps, instead of led, we should, as the animals are scarcely able to waddle, have used the word goaded—to be immolated at the altar of gluttony, in celebration of Christmas ! To admiring crowds, on the eve itself, are the results of oil-cake and turnip feeding displayed, in the various butchers' shops of the metropolis and its vicinity ; and the efficacy of walnut-cramming is illustrated in Leadenhall market,—where Norfolk turkeys and Dorking fowls appear, in numbers and magnitude unrivalled. The average weight given for each turkey, by the statement heretofore quoted by us, of the number and gravity of those birds sent

up to London from Norfolk, during two days of a Christmas, some years ago—is nearly twelve pounds ; but what is called a fine bird, in Leadenhall Market, weighs, when trussed, from eighteen to one or two-and-twenty pounds,—the average price of which may be stated at twenty shillings ; and prize turkeys have been known to weigh more than a quarter of a hundred weight.

Brawn is another dish of this season ; and is sold by the poulterers, fishmongers, and pastry-cooks. The supply for the consumption of London is chiefly derived from Canterbury, Oxfordshire, and Hampshire. “It is manufactured from the flesh of large boars, which are suffered to live in a half-wild state, and, when put up to fatten, are strapped and belted tight round the principal parts of the carcass, in order to make the flesh become dense and brawny. This article comes to market, in rolls about two feet long, and ten inches in diameter, packed in wicker baskets.”

Sandys observes that “Brawn is a dish of great antiquity, and may be found in most of the old bills of fare for coronation and other great feasts.” “Brawn, mustard, and malmsey, were directed for breakfast, at Christmas, during Queen Elizabeth’s reign ; and Dugdale, in his account of the Inner Temple Revels, of the same age, states the same directions for that society. The French,” continues Sandys, “do not appear to have been so well acquainted with it ; for, on the capture of Calais by them, they found a large quantity, which they guessed to be some dainty, and tried every means of preparing it ; in vain did they roast it, bake it, and boil it—it was impracticable and impenetrable to their culinary arts. Its merits, however, being at length discovered, ‘Ha !’ said the monks, ‘what delightful fish !’—and immediately added it to their fast-day viands. The Jews, again, could not believe it was procured from that impure beast, the hog,—and included it in their list of clean animals.”

Amid the interior forms to be observed, on this evening, by those who would keep their Christmas after the old orthodox fashion—the first to be noticed is that of the Yule Clog. This huge block,—which, in ancient times, and consistently with the capacity of its vast receptacle, was frequently the root of a large

tree,—it was the practice to introduce into the house, with great ceremony, and to the sound of music. Herrick's direction is:—

“Come, bring with a noise,
My merrie, merrie boys,
The Christmas log to the firing;
While my good dame she
Bids you all be free,
And drink to your heart's desiring.”

In Drake's “Winter Nights” mention is made of the Yule Clog, as lying, “in ponderous majesty, on the kitchen floor,” until “each had sung his Yule song, standing on its centre”—ere it was consigned to the flames that

“Went roaring up the chimney wide.”

This Yule Clog, according to Herrick, was to be lighted with the brand of the last year's log—which had been carefully laid aside for the purpose; and music was to be played during the ceremony of lighting:—

“With the last yeere's brand
Light the new block, and
For good successe in his spending,
On your psalties play,
That sweet luck may
Come while the log is a teending.”

This log appears to have been considered as sanctifying the roof-tree,—and was probably deemed a protection against those evil spirits over whom this season was, in every way, a triumph. Accordingly, various superstitions mingled with the prescribed ceremonials in respect of it. From the authority already quoted on this subject, we learn that its virtues were not to be extracted, unless it were lighted with clean hands—a direction, probably, including both a useful household hint to the domestics, and, it may be, a moral of a higher kind:—

“Wash your hands, or else the fire
Will not tend to your desire;
Unwash'd hands, ye maidens, know,
Dead the fire, though ye blow.”

Around this fire, when duly lighted, the hospitalities of the evening were dispensed ; and, as the flames played about it and above it, with a pleasant song of their own, the song and the tale and the jest went cheerily round. In different districts, different omens attached themselves to circumstances connected with this observance ;—but generally it was deemed an evil one, if the log went out during the night—or, we suppose, during the symposium. The extinguished brand was, of course, to be preserved, to furnish its ministry to the ceremonial of the ensuing year.

The Yule Clog is still lighted up, on Christmas-eve, in various parts of England—and particularly in the north. In some places, where a block of sufficient dimensions is not readily come by, it is usual to lay aside a large coal for the purpose,—which, if not quite orthodox, is an exceedingly good succedaneum, and a very rich source of cheerful inspirations.

Another feature of this evening, in the houses of the more wealthy, was the tall Christmas candles, with their wreaths of evergreens, which were lighted up, along with the Yule log, and placed on the upper table, or dais, of ancient days. Those of our readers who desire to light the Christmas candles, this year, may place them on the sideboard, or in any conspicuous situation. Brand, however, considers the Yule log and the Christmas candle to be but one observance—and that the former is only a substitute for the latter. By our ancestors, of the Latin church, Christmas was formerly called the “Feast of Lights”—and numbers of lights were displayed on the occasion. The lights and the title were, both, typical of the religious light dawning upon the world at that sacred period—of the advent, in fact, of the “Light of lights”—and the conquest over moral darkness. Hence, it is thought, the *domestic* ceremony of the Christmas candle,—and that the Yule block was but another form of the same—the poor man’s Christmas candle.

Occasionally, the Catholics appear to have made these Christmas candles (as also the candles exhibited by them, on other occasions of the commemorations connected with their religion) in a triangular form, as typical of the Trinity. Mr. Hone, in his volume on the subject of “Ancient Mysteries,” gives a representation of one of these candles ;—and Mr. Crofton Croker, in a

letter to us, speaking of the huge dip candles called Christmas candles, exhibited, at this season, in the chandlers' shops in Ireland, and presented by them to their customers, says, "It was the custom, I have been told (for the mystery of such matters was confined to the kitchen), to burn the three branches down to the point in which they united,—and the remainder was reserved to 'see in,' as it was termed, the new year by." "There is," says Mr. Croker, "always considerable ceremony observed, in lighting these great candles, on Christmas eve. It is thought unlucky to snuff one; and certain auguries are drawn from the manner and duration of their burning."

The customs peculiar to Christmas-eve are numerous,—and various in different parts of the British isles;—the peculiarities, in most cases, arising from local circumstances or traditions, and determining the *particular* forms of a celebration which is *universal*. To enter upon anything like an enumeration of these, it would be necessary to allow ourselves another volume. We must, therefore, confine ourselves to the general observances by which the Christmas spirit works; and each of our readers will have no difficulty in connecting the several local customs which come under his own notice with the particular feature of common celebration to which they belong.

But—all men in all places, who would keep Christmas-eve as Christmas-eve should be kept, must set the wassail-bowl a-flowing for the occasion. "Fill me a mighty bowl!" says Herrick, "up to the brim!"—and though this fountain of "quips, and cranks, and wreathed smiles," belongs, in an especial sense, to Twelfth-night (Twelfth-night not being Twelfth-night, without it), yet it should be compounded for every one of the festival nights, and invoked to spread its inspirations over the entire season.

"Honor to you who sit
Near to the well of wit,
And drink your fill of it!"—

again says our friend Herrick (what could we do without him, in this Christmas book of ours?)—And surely, judging by such effects as we have witnessed, Herrick must have meant the wassail-bowl. We are perfectly aware that there are certain other

dwellers in that same bowl. Truth has been said to lie at the bottom of a well ; and we have certainly seen him unseasonably brought up out of the very well in question, by those who have gone further into its depths than was necessary for reaching the abode of wit. No doubt, truth is, at all times, a very respectable personage ; but there are certain times when he and wit do not meet on the best of terms ; and he is apt, occasionally, to be somewhat of a revel-marrer. The garb and temper in which he often follows wit out of that bowl, are not those in which he appears to the most advantage. We know, also, that there is yet a deeper deep, in which worse things still reside ; and although there be pearls there, too,—and the skilful diver may bring treasures up out of that bowl, and escape all its evil spirits, besides,—yet it is, at any rate, not on this night of subdued mirth, that we intend to recommend an exploration of these further depths. But still the bowl should be produced,—and go round. A cheerful sporting with the light bubbles that wit flings up to its surface, is perfectly consistent with the sacred character of the night,—and, for ourselves, *we* will have a was-sail-bowl, this Christmas-eve.

The word, wassail, is derived from the Saxon, *was-haile* ; which word, and *drinc-heil* (*heil*, health), were, as appears from old authors quoted by Brand, the usual ancient phrases of quaffing among the English, and equivalent to the “here’s to you,” and “I pledge you,” of the present day. “The wassail-bowl,” says Warton, “is Shakspeare’s gossip’s bowl, in the *Midsummer Night’s Dream*.” It should be composed, by those who can afford it, of some rich wine, highly spiced and sweetened, with roasted apples floating on its surface. But ale was more commonly substituted for the wine, mingled with nutmeg, ginger, sugar, toast, and roasted crabs. “It is,” says Leigh Hunt, “a good-natured bowl,—and accommodates itself to the means of all classes, rich and poor. You may have it of the costliest wine, or the humblest malt liquor. But in no case must the roasted apples be forgotten. They are the *sine quâ non* of the wassail-bowl—as the wassail-bowl is of the day (*he* is speaking of New Year’s day) : and very pleasant they are, provided they are not mixed up too much with the beverage,—balmy, comfortable, and

different,—a sort of meat in the drink—but innocent withal, and reminding you of the orchards. They mix their flavor with the beverage, and the beverage with them, giving a new meaning to the line of the poet ;—

‘ The gentler apple’s winy juice ;’

for both winy and gentler have they become, by this process. Our ancestors gave them the affectionate name of ‘ lamb’s wool ;’ for we cannot help thinking (in spite of what is intimated by one of our authorities), that this term applied more particularly to the apples, and not so much to the bowl altogether ; though, if it did, it shows how indispensably necessary to it they were considered.” With all deference to Mr. Leigh Hunt’s pleasant and graceful trifling, lamb’s wool was the title given to the composition itself—no doubt, on account of the delicate and harmonious qualities to which the apples contribute their share. Our readers will find an account of the alleged origin of this annual practice, in a curious description of an old wassail-bowl, carved upon the oaken beam that supported a chimney piece, in an old mansion in Kent—which description is copied by Hone, into his “ Every Day Book,” from the “ Antiquarian Repertory.” In the halls of our ancestors, this bowl was introduced with the inspiring cry of “ wassail,” three times repeated,—and immediately answered by a song from the chaplain. We hope our readers will sing to the wassail-bowl, this Christmas-tide.

We find that, in some parts of Ireland, and in Germany (and, probably, in districts of England, too), Christmas-eve is treated as a night of omens,—and that practices exist, for gathering its auguries, having a resemblance to those of our northern neighbors at Halloween. Many beautiful, and some solemn, superstitions belong to this night and the following morning. It is stated by Sir Walter Scott, in one of his notes to *Marmion*, to be an article of popular faith, “ that they who are born on Christmas or Good Friday have the power of seeing spirits, and even of commanding them ;” and he adds, that “ the Spaniards imputed the haggard and downcast looks of their Philip II., to the disagreeable visions to which this privilege subjected him.”

Among the finest superstitions of the night, may be mentioned that which is alluded to by Shakspeare, in the lines which we have placed as the epigraph to the present chapter. It is a consequence or application of that very ancient and popular belief which assigns the night for the wanderings of spirits,—and supposes them, at the crowing of “the cock, that is the trumpet to the morn,” to start “like a guilty thing upon a fearful summons,” and betake themselves to flight. Here, again, as in so many cases of vulgar superstition, a sort of mental metonymy has taken place; and the crowing of the cock,—which in the early stage of the belief was imagined to be the signal for the departure of evil spirits, only *because* it announced the morning,—is, in the further stage which we are examining, held to be a sound *in itself* intolerable to these shadowy beings. Accordingly, it is supposed that, on the eve of Christmas, “the bird of dawning singeth all night long,” to scare away all evil things from infesting the hallowed hours :—

“ And then they say, no spirit dares stir abroad,
The nights are wholesome; then no planets strike,
No fairy takes, nor witch hath power to charm,
So hallow’d and so gracious is the time.”

In the south-west of England, there exists a superstitious notion, that the oxen are to be found kneeling, in their stalls, at midnight of this vigil, as if in adoration of the Nativity;—an idea which Brand, no doubt correctly, supposes to have originated from the representations, by early painters, of the event itself. That writer mentions a Cornish peasant who told him (1790) of his having, with some others, watched several oxen, in their stalls, on the eve of old Christmas-day. “At twelve o’clock at night, they observed the two oldest oxen fall upon their knees, and, as he expressed it, in the idiom of the country, make ‘a cruel moan like Christian creatures.’” To those who regard the analogies of the human mind—who mark the progress of tradition—who study the diffusion of certain fancies, and their influence upon mankind—an anecdote related by Mr. Howison, in his “Sketches of Upper Canada,” is full of comparative interest. He mentions meeting an Indian, at midnight, creeping cautiously along, in the stillness

of a beautiful moonlight Christmas-eve. The Indian made signals to him to be silent ; and, when questioned as to his reason, replied, —“ Me watch to see the deer kneel ; this is Christmas night, and all the deer fall upon their knees, to the great spirit, and look up.”

In various parts of England, bees are popularly said to express their veneration for the Nativity, by “singing,” as it is called, in their hives, at midnight, upon Christmas-eve :—and in some places, particularly in Derbyshire, it is asserted that the watcher may hear the ringing of subterranean bells. In the mining districts, again, the workmen declare that

“ ——— ever 'gainst that season comes
Wherein our Saviour's birth is celebrated,”

high mass is solemnly performed, in that cavern which contains the richest lode of ore,—that it is brilliantly lighted up with candles, —and that the service is chanted by unseen choristers.

Superstitions of this kind seem to be embodied in the carol commencing with “I saw three ships come sailing in,” to which we have before alluded ;—the rhythm of which old song is, to our ear, singularly melodious :—

“ And all the bells on earth shall ring,
On Christmas-day, on Christmas-day,
And all the bells on earth shall ring,
On Christmas-day in the morning.

And all the angels in Heaven shall sing,
On Christmas-day, on Christmas-day,
And all the angels in Heaven shall sing,
On Christmas-day in the morning.

And all the souls on earth shall sing,
On Christmas-day, on Christmas-day,
And all the souls on earth shall sing,
On Christmas-day in the morning.”

Such fancies are but the natural echoes, in the popular mind, of ancient songs and customs :—and so strongly is that mind impressed with the feeling of a triumph pervading the entire natural economy on

“ the happy night
That to the cottage as the crown,
Brought tidings of salvation down,”—

that even the torpid bees are figured, in its superstitions, to utter a voice of gladness,—the music of sweet chimes to issue from the bosom of the earth,—and rich harmonies to echo and high ceremonies be gorgeously performed, amid the hush and mystery of buried cells.

We must not omit to mention, that these supposed natural testimonies to the triumph of the time have been, in some places, used as means of divination, on a very curious question. The change of style introduced into our calendars, nearly a century ago, and by which Christmas-day was displaced from its ancient position therein, gave great dissatisfaction, on many accounts,—and on none more than that of its interference with this ancient festival. The fifth and sixth of January continued, long, to be observed as the true anniversary of the Nativity, and its vigil ;—and the kneeling of the cattle, the humming of the bees, and the ringing of subterranean bells, were anxiously watched, for authentications on this subject. The singular fact of the budding, about the period of old Christmas-day, of the Cadenham oak, in the New Forest of Hampshire,—and the same remarkable feature of the Glastonbury thorn (explained in various ways, but, probably, nowhere more satisfactorily than in the number for the 31st December, 1833, of the Saturday Magazine),—were, of course, used, by the vulgar, as confirmations of their own tradition ; and the putting forth of their leaves was earnestly waited for, as an unquestionable homage to the joyous spirit of the true period.

We have already alluded to the high ceremonies with which the great day is ushered in, amongst the Catholics, and to the beautiful music of the midnight mass :—

“That only night of all the year
Saw the stoled priest his chalice rear.”

The reader who would have a very graphic and striking account of the Christmas-eve mass, as performed by torchlight, amid the hills, in certain districts of Ireland, will find one in Mr. Carlton’s “Traits and Stories of the Irish Peasantry.”

We have also mentioned, that all the watches of this hallowed night shall ring to the sounds of earthly minstrelsy, imitating, as

best they may, the heavenly choirs that hailed its rising over Judea, nearly two centuries ago. Not for the shepherds, alone, was that song! Its music was for us, as for them;—and all minstrelsy, however rude, is welcome, on this night, that gives us any echoes of it, however wild. For us, too, on the blessed day of which this vigil keeps the door, “is born, in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord;”—and we, too, amid the sacred services of to-morrow, will “go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us.”

CHRISTMAS DAY.

25TH DECEMBER.

AND now has arrived the great and important day itself, which gives its title to the whole of this happy season,—and the high and blessed work of man's redemption is begun. The pæan of universal rejoicing swells up on every side; and, after those religious exercises which are the language that man's joy should take first—the day is one of brightened spirits and general congratulation. In no way can man better express his sense of its inestimable gift, than by the condition of mind that receives gladly, and gives freely,—than by mustering his worldly affections, that he may renew them in the spirit of the time. This is not the proper place to speak more minutely of the *religious* sentiments and services which belong to the season, than we have already done. We may merely remark that the streets of the city, and the thousand pathways of the country are crowded, on this morning, by rich and poor, young and old, coming in on all sides—gathering from all quarters,—to hear the particulars of the “glad tidings” proclaimed; and each lofty cathedral and lowly village church sends up a voice, to join the mighty chorus whose glad burthen is—“Glory to God in the highest; and on earth peace, good will toward men.”

From the religious duties of the day, we must turn, at once, to its secular observances; and these we will take in the order (with reference to the progress of its hours) in which they come,—mingling the customs of modern times with those of the past, in our pages,—as, in many respects, we wish our readers would do, in practice.

On the subject of the identity of the modern plum-pudding with the ancient *hackin*, we are furnished with the following curious remarks, by Mr. Crofton Croker—which we think well worth submitting, for the consideration of the curious in such matters.

“‘The *hackin*,’ says that amusing old tract, entitled, ‘Round about our Coal Fire,’ ‘must be boiled by day-break, or, else, two young men must take the maiden [i. e. the cook] by the arms, and run her round the market-place, till she is ashamed of her laziness.’ Brand, whose explanation Hone, in his *Every-day Book*, has adopted, renders *hackin* by ‘the great sausage;’ and Nares tells us, that the word means ‘a large sort of sausage, being a part of the cheer provided for Christmas festivities,’—deriving the word from *hack*, to cut or chop. Agreeing in this derivation, we do not admit Nares’s explanation. *Hackin*, literally taken, is mince-meat of any kind; but Christmas mince-meat, everybody knows, means a composition of meat and suet (*hack*-ed small), seasoned with fruit and spices. And from the passage above quoted, that ‘the *hackin* must be boiled [i. e. boiling] by day-break,’ it is obvious, the worthy archdeacon, who, as well as Brand and Hone, have explained it as a great sausage, did not see that *hackin* is neither more nor less than the old name for the national English dish of plum-pudding.

“We have heard first rate authorities, upon this subject, assert—the late Dr. Kitchener and Mr. Douce were amongst the number,—that plum-pudding—the renowned English plum-pudding—was a dish, comparatively speaking, of modern invention: and that plum-porridge was its ancient representative. But this, for the honor of England, we never would allow,—and always fought a hard battle upon the point. Brand, indeed, devotes a section of his observations on popular antiquities to ‘Yuledoughs, mince-pies, Christmas-pies, and plum-porridge,’ omitting plum-pudding,—which new Christmas dish, or rather, new name for an old Christmas dish, appears to have been introduced with the reign of the ‘merry monarch,’ Charles II. A revolution always creates a change in manners, fashions, tastes, and names;—and our theory is that, among other changes, the *hackin* of our ancestors was then baptized plum-pudding. In *Poor Robin’s Almanac* for 1676, it is observed of Christmas,—‘good cheer doth so abound

as if all the world were made of minced-pies, plum-pudding, and furmity.' And we might produce other quotations, to show that, as the name hackin fell into disuse, about this period, it was generally supplanted by that of plum-pudding."

Plum-pudding is a truly national dish ; and refuses to flourish out of England. It can obtain no footing in France. A Frenchman will dress like an Englishman, swear like an Englishman, and get drunk like an Englishman ; but if you would offend him for ever, compel him to eat plum-pudding. A few of the leading restaurateurs, wishing to appear extraordinary, have *plomb-pooding* upon their cartes ; but in no instance is it ever ordered by a Frenchman. Everybody has heard the story of St. Louis—Henri Quatre,—or whoever else it might be—who, wishing to regale the English ambassador, on Christmas-day, with a plum-pudding, procured an excellent receipt for making one ; which he gave to his cook, with strict injunctions that it should be prepared with due attention to all particulars. The weight of the ingredients, the size of the copper, the quantity of water, the duration of time,—everything was attended to except one trifle ;—the king forgot the cloth ; and the pudding was served up, like so much soup, in immense tureens, to the surprise of the ambassador,—who was, however, too well bred to express his astonishment.

Amongst our ancestors, the duties of the day which followed first after those of religion, were the duties which immediately spring out of a religion like ours—those of charity,

“ When

Among their children, comfortable men
Gather about great fires, and yet feel cold,
Alas ! then for the houseless beggar old !”—

was a sentiment of which they never allowed themselves to lose sight. Amid the preparations making for his own enjoyment, and the comforts by which he set at defiance the austerities of the season, the old English gentleman did not forget the affecting truths, so beautifully embodied in words, by Mary Howitt :—

“ In rich men’s halls, the fire is piled,
And ermine robes keep out the weather ;
In poor men’s huts, the fire is low,

Through broken panes, the keen winds blow,
And old and young are cold together.

Oh ! poverty is disconsolate !—
Its pains are many, its foes are strong !
The rich man, in his jovial cheer,
Wishes 't was winter through the year ;
The poor man, 'mid his wants profound,
With all his little children round,
Prays God that winter be not long !”

Immediately after the service of the day, the country gentleman stood, of old, at his own gate, and superintended the distribution of alms to the aged and the destitute. The hall, prepared for the festival of himself and his friends, was previously opened to his tenants and retainers ; and the good things of the season were freely dispensed to all. “There was once,” says the writer of ‘Round about our Coal Fire,’ “hospitality in the land. An English gentleman, at the opening of the great day, had all his tenants and neighbors entered his hall by day-break ; the strong beer was broached, and the black-jacks went plentifully about, with toast, sugar, nutmeg, and good Cheshire cheese. * * *

The servants were then running here and there, with merry hearts and jolly countenances. Every one was busy in welcoming of guests, and looked as snug as new-licked puppies. The lasses were as blithe and buxom as the maids in good Queen Bess’s days, when they ate sirloins of roast-beef for breakfast. Peg would scuttle about to make a toast for John, while Tom run *harum-scarum* to draw a jug of ale for Margery.”

The solemn festivals of ancient superstition were marked either by bloody sacrifice, secret revelling, or open licentiousness. There was no celebration of rites,—real or symbolical,—which might become a religion of cheerfulness, decency, and mercy. There was no medium between a mysteriousness dark and gloomy as the grave, and a wild and savage enthusiasm or riotous frenzy, which mingled with the worship of the gods the impassioned depravity of human nature. From Moloch, upon whose dreadful altar children were offered—to Bacchus, at whose shrine reason and virtue were prostrated,—there were none of the fabled deities of antiquity whose service united the spirit of devotion with inno-

cent pleasures and the exercise of the domestic charities. This was reserved for the Christian religion;—one of the marks of whose divinity it is, that it can mingle with many of the pleasures and all the virtues of the world, without sullyng the purity of its glory—without depressing the sublime elevation of its character. The rites of Ceres were thought profaned, if the most virtuous believer of the divinity of that goddess beheld them, without having undergone the ceremonies of special initiation. The worship of Saturn gave rise to a liberty inconsistent with the ordinary government of states. At the altar of Diana, on certain days, the Spartans flogged children to death. And the offerings which, on state occasions, the Romans made to Jupiter, were such as feudal vassals might offer to their warlike lord. But now, thank God!—to use the words of Milton's Hymn on the Nativity:—

“ Peor and Baalim

Forsake their temples dim,

With that twice-batter'd God of Palestine;

And mooned Ashtaroth,

Heaven's queen and mother both,

Now sits not girt with tapers' holy shine,

The Lybick Hammon shrinks his horn;

In vain the Tyrian maids their wounded Thammuz mourn.

And sullen Moloch, fled,

Has left in shadows dread

His burning idol all of blackest hue;

In vain with Cymbals' ring,

They call the grisly king,

In dismal dance about the furnace blue:

The brutish Gods of Nile as fast,

Iris, and Orus, and the dog Anubis haste.

Nor is Osiris seen

In Memphian grove or green

Trampling the unshowered grass with lowings loud;

Nor can he be at rest,

Within his sacred chest;

Naught but profoundest hell can be his shroud.

In vain, with timbrelled anthems dark,

The sable-stoled sorcerers bear his worship'd ark.

He feels from Judah's land

The dreaded Infant's hand;

The rays of Bethlehem blind his dusky eyne ;
Nor all the gods beside
Longer dare abide ;
Not Typhon huge, ending in snaky twine ;
Our Babe, to show his God-head true,
Can in his swaddling bands control the damned crew."

Oh ! how different were those religions of the passions and the senses from that of the sentiments and pure affections of the Christian heart ; which, as it rises to heaven in sublime devotion, expands in charity towards its kind,—until it comprehends all humanity in the bond of universal benevolence. To ameliorate the temporal as well as elevate the spiritual state of man is its distinguishing excellence—the sublime peculiarity of its character, as a religious dispensation. All the systems of superstition were external and gross,—or mysterious and occult. They either encouraged the follies and the passions of men, or, by a vain and fruitless knowledge, flattered their vanity. But Christianity came to repress the one and to dissipate the other ;—to make the exercise of the virtues the result and the proof of mental attachment to the doctrines which, while they afford grand subjects of eternal interest, contain the principles of all true civilisation. It is in this religion alone that faith is the sister of charity ;—that the former brightens, with the beams of another world, the institutions by which the latter blesses this,—those institutions of mercy and of instruction which cover the land with monuments of humanity, that are nowhere to be found but among the temples of our faith.

And now, when silent and desolate are even the high places over which Augustus ruled—fallen majestic Rome with all her gods,—the religion proclaimed to the humble shepherds,—whose sound was first heard by the moonlight streams and under the green boughs,—has erected, on the ruins of ancient grandeur, a sublimer dominion than all those principalities of the earth which refused its hospitality. It came in gentleness and lowliness, and the spirit of peace ; and now, it grasps the power of the universe, and wields the civilized energies of the greatest of all the nations, —to the beneficent extension of its authority,—imperishable in its glory, and bloodless in its triumphs !

Our account of Christmas would not be complete,—without

giving some description of the forms which attended the introduction of the boar's head at the feasts of our ancestors.

The boar's head soused, then, was carried into the great hall, with much state ; preceded by the Master of the Revels, and followed by choristers and minstrels, singing and playing compositions in its honor. Dugdale relates that at the Inner Temple, for the first course of the Christmas dinner, was "served in, a fair and large bore's head, upon a silver platter, with minstrelsye." And here we would observe,—what we do not think has been before remarked,—that the boar's-head carols appear to have systematically consisted of three verses. A manuscript, indeed, which we once met with, stated that the "caroll, upon the bringynge in of the bore's head, was sung to the glorie of the blessed Trinytie ;" and the three subsequent illustrative specimens,—in which the peculiarity mentioned may be observed,—tend to confirm this notion. At St. John's, Oxford, in 1607, before the bearer of the boar's head,—who was selected for his height and lustiness, and wore a green silk scarf, with an empty sword-scabbard dangling at his side,—went a runner, dressed in a horseman's coat, having a boar's spear in his hand,—a huntsman in green, carrying the naked and bloody sword belonging to the head-bearer's scabbard,—and "two pages in tafatyse sarcenet," each with a "mess of mustard." Upon which occasion these verses were sung :—

"The boare is dead,
 Loe, heare is his head,
 What man could have done more
 Then his head of to strike,
 Meleager like,
 And bringe it as I doe before ?

He livinge spoyled
 Where good men toyled,
 Which made kinde Ceres sorrye ;
 But now, dead and drawne,
 Is very good brawne,
 And wee have brought it for ye.

Then sett downe the swineyard,
 The foe to the vineyard,
 Lett Bacchus crowne his fall ;

Lett this boare's head and mustard
Stand for pigg, goose, and custard,
And so you are welcome all."

So important was the office of boar's-head bearer considered to be, that, in 1107, Holinshed has chronicled the circumstance of England's king, Henry II., bringing up to the table of his son, the young prince, a boar's head, with trumpeters going before him. From this species of service, it is probable that many of our heraldic bearings have originated. "The ancient crest of the family of Edgecumbe," observes Ritson, "was the boar's head, crowned with bays, upon a charger; which," he adds, "has been very injudiciously changed into the entire animal."

This same diligent arranger and illustrator of our old ballads gives us, in his collection of ancient songs, a Boar's-head Carol—which probably belongs to the fourteenth century,—from a manuscript in his possession,—now, we believe, in the British Museum.—

In die nativitatis.

"Nowell, nowell, nowell, nowell,
Tydyngs gode y thyngke to tell.
The borys hede that we bryng here,
Be tokeneth a prince with owte pere,
Ys born this day to bye vs dere,
Nowell.

A bore ys a souerayn beste,
And acceptable in every feste
So mote thys lorde be to moste & leste,
Nowell.

This borys hede we bryng with song,
In worchyp of hym that thus sprang
Of a virgyne to redresse all wrong,
Nowell."

The printing-press of Wynkyn de Worde has preserved to us the carol, believed to have been generally used, prior to 1521, upon these occasions; a modernized version of which continues to be sung, in Queen's College, Oxford. It is entitled, "À Caroll, bringyne in the Bores heed," and runs thus:—

“ Caput apri defero
 Reddens laudes Domino,
 The bore's heade in hande bring I
 With garlandes gay and rosemary,
 I pray you all synge merely,
 Qui estis in convivio.

The bore's head I understande
 Is the chefe servyce in this lande,
 Loke wherever it be fande,
 Servite cum cantico.

Be gladde, lordes both more and lasse,
 For this hath ordayned our stewarde,
 To chere you all this Christmasse,
 The bore's head with mustarde.”

A tradition of the same college states the introduction there of the boar's head (which, according to Ritson, is now a mere representation, “neatly carved in wood”), to be contrived “as a commemoration of an act of valor, performed by a student of the college, who, while walking in the neighboring forest of Shotover, and reading Aristotle, was suddenly attacked by a wild boar. The furious beast came, open-mouthed, upon the youth; who, however, very courageously, and with a happy presence of mind, is said to have rammed in the volume, and cried *græcum est*,—fairly choking the savage with the sage.” To this legend, a humorous “song, in honor of the Boar's head, at Queen's College, Oxford,” refers,—having for its motto, “*Tam Marti quam Mercurio*”—but for which we cannot afford space.

The ancient mode of garnishing the boar's head, was with sprigs of sweet-scented herbs. Dekker (than whom we could not name a more appropriate authority on this subject), speaking of persons apprehensive of catching the plague, says, “they went (most bitterly) miching and muffled up and down, with rue and wormwood stuf into their eares and nostrils, looking like so many bore's heads, stuck with branches of rosemary, to be served in for brawne at Christmas.” The following lines describe the manner of serving up this famous dish:—

— “If you would send up the brawner's head,
 Sweet rosemary and bays around it spread;

His foaming tusks let some large pippin grace,
Or 'midst these thundering spears an orange place ;
Sauce like himself, offensive to its foes,
The roguish mustard, dangerous to the nose ;
Sack, and the well-spiced hippocras, the wine
Wassail, the bowl with ancient ribands fine,
Porridge with plums, and Turkeys, with the chine."

Sack and hippocras are no longer to be found in our cellars ; but, as we have shown, we still compound the wassail-bowl.

The Christmas dinner of modern days is—as most of our readers know, a gathering together of generations, an assembling of Israel by its tribes. Contrast with this modern Christmas dinner—as well as with the high festival of yore—the dreary picture of a Christmas-day and dinner, under the stern prescription of the Puritans—as given in his diary, by Pepys, the chatty secretary to the Admiralty. "1668, Christmas-day. To dinner," thus he writes, "alone with my wife ; who, poor wretch ! sat undressed, all day till ten at night, altering and lacing of a noble petticoat ; while I, by her, making the boy read to me the life of Julius Cæsar and Des Cartes' book of Music."

But the best of the day is yet to come !—and we should have no objection to join the younger members of the group, in the merry sports that await the evening. We need not give the programme. It is like that of all the other Christmas nights. The blazing fire, the song, the dance, the riddle, the jest, and many another merry sport, are of its spirits. Mischief will be committed under the misletoe bough,—and all the good wishes of the season sent round under the sanction of the wassail-bowl.

ST. STEPHEN'S DAY.

26TH DECEMBER.



THIS day—which, in our calendar, is still dedicated to the first Christian martyr, St. Stephen (for John the Baptist perished in the same cause, before the consummation of the old law, and the full introduction of the Christian dispensation),—is more popularly known by the title of Boxing-day ; and its importance, amongst the Christmas festivities, is derived from the practice whence that title comes.

We have already mentioned that the custom of bestowing gifts, at seasons of joyous commemoration, has been a form of thankfulness at most periods ;—and that it may have been directly borrowed, by the Christian worshippers, from the Polytheists of Rome, along with those other modes of celebration which descended to the Christmas festival, from that source,—introduced, however, amongst our own observances, under scripture sanctions, drawn both from the Old and New Testaments. The particular form of that practice, whose donations are known by the title of Christmas-boxes (and which appear to differ from New-year's gifts in this,—that the former, passing from the rich to the poor, and from the master to his dependants, are not reciprocal in their distribution,—whereas the latter are those gifts, for the mutual expression of good-will and congratulation, which are exchanged between friends and acquaintances), was, perhaps, originally one of the observances of Christmas-day, and made a portion of its charities. The multiplied business of that festival, however, probably caused it to be postponed till the day following,—and thereby placed the Christmas-boxes under the patronage of St. Stephen. The title itself has been derived, by some, from the

box which was kept on board of every vessel that sailed upon a distant voyage, for the reception of donations to the priest ; who, in return, was expected to offer masses for the safety of the expedition, to the particular saint having charge of the ship—and, above all, of the box. This box was not to be opened till the return of the vessel ; and we can conceive that, in cases where the mariners had had a perilous time of it, this casket would be found to enclose a tolerable offering. Probably the state of the box might be as good an evidence as the log-book, of the character of the voyage which had been achieved. The mass was, at that time, called Christmass ;—and the boxes kept to pay for it were, of course, called Christmass-boxes. The poor, amongst those who had an interest in the fate of these ships,—or of those who sailed in them,—were in the habit of begging money from the rich, that they might contribute to the mass boxes ; and hence the title which has descended to our day :—giving to the anniversary of St. Stephen's martyrdom the title of Christmas-boxing day—and, by corruption, its present popular one of Boxing-day.

A relic of these ancient boxes yet exists, in the earthen or wooden box, with a slit in it, which still bears the same name ; and is carried, by servants and children, for the purpose of gathering money, at this season—being broken only when the period of collection is supposed to be over.

Most of our readers know that it was the practice, not many years ago (and in some places is so still), for families to keep lists of the servants of tradesmen and others, who were considered to have a claim upon them for a Christmas-box at this time. The practice,—besides opening a door to great extortion,—is one, in every way, of considerable annoyance,—and is on the decline. There is, however,—as they who are exposed to it know,—some danger in setting it at defiance, where it is yet in force. One of the most amusing circumstances, arising out of this determination to evade the annoyances of Boxing-day, is related by Sandys. A person in trade had imprudently given directions that he should be denied, on this day, to all applicants for money ; and amongst those who presented themselves at his door, on this errand, was, unfortunately, a rather importunate creditor. In the height of his indignation, at being somewhat uncourteously repulsed, he imme-

diately consulted his lawyer; and, having done *that*, we need scarcely relate the catastrophe. It follows, as a matter of course. A docket was struck against the unsuspecting victim of Christmas-boxophobia.

Boxing-day, however, is still a great day, in London. Upon this anniversary, every street resounds with the clang of hall-door knockers. Rap follows rap, in *rapid* succession,—the harsh and discordant tones of iron mingling with those of rich and sonorous brass, and giving a degenerate imitation of the brazen clangor of the trumpet which formed the summons to the gate, in days of old,—and which, together with the martial music of the drum, appears to have been adopted, at a later period, by the Christmas-boxers, on St. Stephen's-day. Pepys, in his diary (1668), records his having been "called up by drums and trumpets;—these things and boxes," he adds, "have cost me much money, this Christmas, and will do more." Which passage seems to have been in the memory of our facetious publisher, when he made the following entry in his journal of last year,—from whence we have taken the liberty of transcribing it.—"Called out," says Spooner (1834), "by the parish beadle, dustmen, and charity-boys. The postman, street-sweepers, chimney-sweepers, lamp-lighters, and waits, will all be sure to wait upon me. These fellows have cost me much money this Christmas,—and will do more, the next."

There is an amusing account, given by a writer of the querulous class, of a boxing-day, in London, a century ago. "By the time I was up," says he, "my servants could do nothing but run to the door. Inquiring the meaning, I was answered, the people were come for their Christmas-box; this was logic to me; but I found at last that, because I had laid out a great deal of ready-money with my brewer, baker, and other tradesmen, they kindly thought it my duty to present their servants with some money, for the favor of having their goods. This provoked me a little; but being told it was the 'custom,' I complied. These were followed by the watch, beadles, dustmen, and an innumerable tribe; but what vexed me the most was the clerk, who has an extraordinary place, and makes as good an appearance as most tradesmen in the parish; to see him come a-boxing, *alias* a-begging, I thought was intolerable: however I found it was 'the cus-

tom too,' so I gave him half-a-crown ; as I was likewise obliged to do the bellman, for breaking my rest for many nights together."

The manner in which the beadle approaches his "good masters and mistresses," for a Christmas-box,—particularly in the villages near the British metropolis,—is, as we have before said, by the presentation of a copy of printed verses, ornamented with wood engravings. These broadsides are usually termed "Bellman's verses ;" and we quite agree with Mr. Leigh Hunt in his opinion, that "good bellman's verses will not do at all. There have been," he remarks, "some such things of late 'most tolerable and not to be endured.' We have seen them witty,—which is a great mistake. Warton and Cowper unthinkingly set the way." "The very absurdity of the bellman's verses is only pleasant, nay, only bearable, when we suppose them written by some actual doggrel-poet, in good faith. Mere mediocrity hardly allows us to give our Christmas-box, or to believe it now-a-days in earnest ; and the smartness of your cleverest worldly-wise men is felt to be wholly out of place. No, no ! give us the good old decrepit bellman's verses, hobbling as their bringer, and taking themselves for something respectable, like his cocked-hat,—or give us none at all."

Upon the bellman's verses which were last year circulated by the beadles of Putney, Chiswick, and other parishes on the west side of London, it was recorded, that they were "first printed in the year 1735 ;"—and our curiosity induced us to inquire of the printer the number annually consumed. "We used, sir," said he, "not many years ago, to print ten thousand copies, and even more ; but now I suppose we don't print above three thousand." Whether the trade of this particular dealer in bellman's verses has passed into other hands,—or whether the encouragement given to the circulation of these broadsides has declined,—the statement of an individual will not of course enable us to determine. But we are inclined to think that,—like other old Christmas customs,—the popularity of bellman's verses is passing away ; and that, before many years have elapsed, penny magazines and unstamped newspapers will have completely superseded these relics of the rude, but sincere, piety of our ancestors.

The claims of dustmen to be remembered, upon "Boxing day,"

were formerly urged, without literary pretensions ; but now, " the march of intellect " has rendered it necessary for them to issue their addresses in print. One of these, which lies before us, represents that " the United Association of Dustmen and Scavengers, of the Parish of —, have the honor to pay their humble duty and respects to the good [*Master or Mistress*] of this house, and to solicit a Christmas mark of approbation of their unwearied exertions, which they flatter themselves conduce so eminently to the comfort and salubrity of the greatest metropolitan city of civilized Europe." Here, however, is another,—in which the spirit of St. Stephen's day is embittered by the rivalries of business ; and the harmony of those two respectable bodies, the Scavengers and Dustmen, appears to have been disturbed. The dustmen, it will be seen, repudiate the scavengers,—and appeal to St. Stephen, on a separate interest.

" TO THE WORTHY INHABITANTS OF THE SOUTHAMPTON ESTATE.

" Ladies and Gentlemen,—At this season, when you are pleased to give to laboring men, employed in collecting your dust, a donation, called Christmas-box, advantage of which is often taken by persons assuming the name of Dustmen, obtaining, under false pretences, your bounty, we humbly submit to your consideration, to prevent such imposition, to bestow no gift on any not producing a brass figure of the following description—A Scotch Fifer, french horn, &c., between his legs.—James Dee and Jerry Cane.—Southampton Paving Act—on the bell.—Contractor—Thomas Salisbury.

" No connexion with scavengers—Please not to return this bill to any one."

The principal Wait, also, leaves a notice of a more imposing description,—stating a regular appointment to the office, by warrant, and admission,—with all the ancient forms of the City and Liberty of Westminster ; and bears a silver-badge and chain, with the arms of that city.

We cannot dismiss the various modes of collecting Christmas-boxes, without a few words upon the pieces of writing carried about by parish boys ; and which, once, presented the only evidence that the schoolmaster was abroad. It appears formerly to

have been the practice, at this season, to hang up in our churches, the work of the most skilful penman in the parish, after it had been generally exhibited; the subject of which was the life of some saint, or other religious legend. Pepys thus mentions the custom:—"26 December, 1665. Saw some fine writing work and flourishing of Mr. Hore, with one that I knew long ago, an acquaintance of Mr. Tomson's at Westminster, that is this man's clerk. It is the story of the several Archbishops of Canterbury, engrossed on vellum, to hang up in Canterbury cathedral, in tables, in lieu of the old ones, which are almost worn out."

To this usage—which was no doubt of monkish origin,—we are inclined to refer the specimens of calligraphy, upon gaudily ornamented sheets of paper, brought round, on St. Stephen's-day, by parish boys and charity school children, and displayed for admiration and reward. The walls of school-rooms, and of the houses of the children's parents, are afterwards decorated with these "Christmas pieces,"—in the same manner as were anciently the walls of churches.

There are, in the different Christian countries of Europe, a variety of popular practices connected with St. Stephen's day:—such as that of bleeding horses, which is mentioned by old Tusser, in his "December's Abstract:"—

" At Christmas is good
To let thy horse blood ;"

and more particularly in his "December's Husbandry :"—

" Ere Christmas be passed, let horse be let blood,
For many a purpose, it doth them much good,
The *day of St. Stephen* old fathers did use."

These various popular observances, however, are generally of that local and peculiar kind which we are compelled to omit in our enumeration, for reasons already given. But there is one of so striking a character, that we must pause to give some account of it.

This custom,—which is called "hunting the wren,"—is generally practised by the peasantry of the south of Ireland, on St. Stephen's-day. It bears a close resemblance to the Manx pro-

ceedings, described by Waldron,—as taking place, however, on a different day.—“ On the 24th of December,” says that writer, in his account of the Isle of Man, “ towards evening, the servants in general have a holiday ; they go not to bed all night, but ramble about till the bells ring in all the churches, which is at twelve o’clock. Prayers being over, they go to hunt the wren ; and after having found one of these poor birds, they kill her, and lay her on a bier, with the utmost solemnity, bringing her to the parish church, and burying her with a whimsical kind of solemnity, singing dirges over her in the Manx language, which they call her knell ; after which Christmas begins.”

The Wren-boys, in Ireland,—who are also called Droleens,—go from house to house, for the purpose of levying contributions,—carrying one or more of these birds, in the midst of a bush of holly, gaily decorated with colored ribands ; which birds they have, like the Manx mummers, employed their morning in killing. The following is their song ; of which they deliver themselves in most monotonous music :—

“ The wren, the wren, the king of all birds,
St. Stephen’s day was caught in the furze,
Although he is little, his family’s great,
I pray you, good landlady, give us a treat.

My box would speak, if it had but a tongue,
And two or three shillings would do it no wrong ;
Sing holly, sing ivy—sing ivy, sing holly,
A drop just to drink, it would drown melancholy.

And if you draw it of the best,
I hope, in heaven your soul will rest ;
But if you draw it of the small,
It won’t agree with these Wren-boys at all.”

If an immediate acknowledgment, either in money or drink, is not made, in return for the civility of their visit, some such nonsensical verses as the following are added :—

“ Last Christmas-day, I turned the spit,
I burned my fingers (I feel it yet),
A cock sparrow flew over the table,
The dish began to fight with the ladle.

The spit got up like a naked man,
And swore he'd fight with the dripping pan;
The pan got up and cocked his tail,
And swore he'd send them all to jail."

The story told, to account for the title of "king of all birds," here given to the wren, is a curious sample of Irish ingenuity,—and is thus stated, in the clever "Tales of the Munster Festivals," by an Irish servant, in answer to his master's inquiry:—

"Saint Stephen! why what the mischief, I ask you again, have I to do with Saint Stephen?"

"Nothen, sure, sir, only this being his day, when all the boys o' the place go about that way, with the wran, the king of all birds, sir, as they say, bekays wanst when all the birds wanted to choose a king, and they said they'd have the bird that would fly highest, the aigle flew higher than any of 'em, till at last when he couldn't fly an inch higher, a little rogue of a wran that was a-hide under his wing, took a fly above him a piece, and was crowned king (of the aigle an' all, sir), tied in the middle o' the holly, that way, you see, sir, by the leg, that is. An old custom, sir."

Vainly have we endeavored to arrive at the probable origin of hunting and killing these little birds, upon this day. The tradition commonly related is by no means satisfactory. It is said that a Danish army would have been surprised and destroyed, by some Irish troops, had not a wren given the alarm, by pecking at some crumbs upon a drum-head—the remains of the sleeping drummer's supper; which roused him, when he instantly beat to arms. And that, from this circumstance, the wren became an object of hatred to the Irish.

Songs, similar in spirit to that of the Irish Droleen boys, were popularly sung by the Greeks. In D'Israeli's "Curiosities of Literature," may be found translations of "the crow song," and "the swallow song;"—between which and the Irish wren song, the resemblance is very striking. "Swallow-singing or chelidonising, as the Greek term is," was, it appears, a method of collecting eleemosynary gifts in the month of Boedromion or August. We think D'Israeli is right, in his opinion that there is, probably, a closer connexion between the custom which produced

the songs of the crow and the swallow, and that of our northern mummeries, than may be at first sight suspected. The subject of mumming we have elsewhere treated at some length ;—but this curious variety of the practice—and the manner in which it seems to connect the subject with the ceremonies of the Greeks,—we could not allow ourselves wholly to omit.

NEW - YEAR 'S EVE.

31ST DECEMBER.

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THIS is the last day of the year ; and the feelings which belong to it are of a tangled yarn. Regrets for the past are mingled with hopes of the future ;—and the heart of man, between the meeting years, stands, like the head of Janus, looking two ways.

The day and eve which precede the new year are marked, in England, by few outward observances, save such as are common to the season ; and it is in the peculiar trains of thought to which they give rise that they have a character of their own.

In Scotland, on the other hand, the festival of this season is, since the Reformation, nearly limited to these two days ; and the last day of the year is distinguished both by omens and by customs peculiar to itself. In Mr. Stewart's "Popular Superstitions of the Highlands," there is an account of some of these omens,—as they were gathered, at no distant period, in that land of mist and mystery ; and a singular example may be mentioned, in the auguries drawn from what was called the Candlemas Bull. The term Candlemas, which has been given to this season, in Scotland and elsewhere, is supposed to have had its origin in some old religious ceremonies which were performed by candle light ;—and the bull was a passing cloud, which, in the Highland imagination, assumed the form of that animal,—and from whose rise or fall, or motions generally, on this night, the seer prognosticated good or bad weather. Something of the same kind is mentioned in Sir John Sinclair's "Statistical Account of Scotland,"—who explains more particularly the auguries gathered from the state of the atmosphere, on New-year's-eve. The superstition in ques-

tion, however, is not peculiar to the Highlands of Scotland; but shared with the northern European nations in general,—most of whom assigned portentous qualities to the winds of New-year's-eve.

It is on this night, that those Scottish mummers, the Guisars,—to whom we have already, more than once, alluded,—still go about the streets,—habited in antic dresses, having their faces covered with vizards, and carrying cudgels in their hands. The doggrel lines repeated by these masquers,—as given by Mr. Callender, in a paper contributed by him to the Transactions of the Antiquarian Society of Scotland, are as follows:—

“Hogmanay,  
Trollolay,  
Gie me o' your white bread  
I'll hae nane o' your grey;”—

and much learning has been exhausted, and ingenuity exercised, in their explanation. The admirable paper of Mr. Repp, in the same Transactions (to which we have already alluded, and which we recommend to the notice of our antiquarian readers) connects them, as we have before hinted, with another superstition common to many of the northern nations;—and which may be compared with one of the articles of popular belief before described, as prevailing in England, on Christmas-eve,—that, viz., which seems to imply that the spirits of evil are, at this time, in peculiar activity, unless kept down by holier and more powerful influences. According to this able investigator, the moment of midnight on New Year's-eve was considered to be a general removing term for the races of Genii,—whether good or bad;—and the two first lines of the cry in question,—which, as he explains them, after the Anglo-Saxon and Icelandic dialects, were words of appeal to the good genii (the hoghmen or hillmen), and of execration against the evil ones (the trolles),—were so used, in consequence of such belief (that these different spirits were, at that hour, in motion), and of the further one that the words of men had power to determine that motion to their own advantage. It is well known that, in some countries,—and we may mention Germany—great importance is attached to words involuntarily uttered, at certain

seasons, and under certain circumstances:—and they are supposed to be either words of betrayal, leaving the speaker open to the machinations of evil spirits, who may apply them in a strained and fatal sense, if at all ambiguous,—or words of power, controlling the designs of demons, and compelling them to work out the good of the utterer, against their will. Now, a superstition of this kind, Mr. Repp says, attaches *generally* to the doctrines of demonology; and he states that he could prove his position, by many instances from Arabic and Persian fairy lore. We may observe that some of the Highland superstitions mentioned by Mr. Stewart,—such as that of sprinkling the household with water, drawn from *the dead and living ford*,—and that of fumigating the apartments, and half smothering their tenants with the smoke from burning piles of the juniper-bush (both considered to operate as charms against the spells of witchcraft, and the malignity of evil eyes), have, evidently, their origin in that same belief,—that the powers of evil are on the wing at this mysterious and solemn time of natural transition.

Some ancient superstitions are likewise alluded to in the old dialogue of Dives and Pauper, as being in force at the beginning of the year,—and which appear to have had a like origin with the Highland ones above described. As an example, mention may be made of the practice of “setting of mete or drynke, by nighte, on the benche, to fede Alholde or Gobelyn.”

We must not forget to observe that Brand speaks of an ancient custom, which he says is still retained in some parts of England,—in which young women go about on this eve, carrying a wassail-bowl, and singing certain verses from door to door;—which custom has certainly some analogy with the Hogmanay practice in Scotland. And we may further state, while we are in the way of tracing resemblances, that the *het pint*, which, in Scotland, was formerly carried about the streets at the midnight of the new year’s coming in,—and which was composed of ale, spirits, sugar, and nutmeg or cinnamon—is neither more nor less, though it was borne about in a kettle, than a Scottish version of the wassail-bowl.

In Ritson’s collection of ancient songs, there is a very spirited carol given, at length,—which appears to have been sung by these

English wassail mummers, in honor of their bowl; but which some of its verses prove to be a Twelfth-night song, and show, therefore, that a similar practice marked the night of Epiphany. It begins right heartily :—

“ A jolly wassel-bowl,  
     A wassel of good ale,  
 Well fare the butler's soul  
     That setteth this to sale;  
             Our jolly wassel :”—

but is too long for insertion in our pages. We should mention here, however, that ale, in all its forms,—whether in that of wassail composition, or in its own simple dignity, “ prince of liquors, old or new !”—was ever the most cherished beverage of our ancestors,—and many and enthusiastic are the songs in its praise. Our readers may take the following verse from a very pleasant example of these carols :—

“ I love no rost, but a nut brown toste,  
     And a crab layde in the fyre,  
 A little bread shall do me stead,  
     Much breade I not desyre :  
 No froste nor snow, no winde, I trowe,  
     Can hurt mee if I wolde ;  
 I am so wrapt, and throwly lapt  
     Of jolly good ale and olde.  
     Back and syde go bare, go bare,  
     Both foote and hand, go colde :  
 But belly God send thee good ale inoughe,  
     Whether it be new or olde.”

We believe that most of the customs which, up to a recent period, filled the streets of Edinburgh with mirth and bustle, on the eve of the new year, have met with discouragement, and of late fallen into disuse,—in consequence of some outrages which were committed under their shelter, in the year 1811. We presume, however, that there are still many places of the northern kingdom, in which the youth waits impatiently for the striking of the midnight hour,—that he may be the earliest to cross the threshold of his mistress,—and the lassie listens eagerly from the moment

when its chiming has ceased, to catch the sound of the *first-foot* on the floor :—

“ The *first foot*’s entering step,  
That sudden on the floor is welcome heard,  
Ere blushing maids have braided up their hair ;  
The laugh, the *hearty kiss*, the good New Year,  
Pronounced with honest warmth.”

Considerable importance was formerly (and probably is still) attached to this custom. The welfare of a family—particularly of the fairer portions of its members—was supposed to depend much on the character of the person who might first cross the threshold, after the mid-hour of this night had sounded. Great care was, therefore, taken to exclude all improper persons ; and—when the privilege of the season is taken into consideration (that, viz.,—of the hearty kiss above mentioned),—it is probable that the maidens themselves might consider it desirable to interfere, after their own fashion, in the previous arrangements which were to secure the priority of admission to an unobjectionable guest.

But our space does not permit us to inquire at length, in the present volume, into any other customs than those which belong to an *English* Christmas season. We have only been able occasionally to advert to others—even amongst our own sister nations—when they helped to throw light upon those which, on this occasion, are our immediate subject. We must therefore return at once, to the only general and conspicuous observance of this eve in England—viz.,—that which is commonly called “seeing the new year in.”

It is almost impossible for man, on this day, to be insensible to the “still small voices” that call upon him for a gathering up of his thoughts. In the very midst of the house of mirth, a shadow passes through the heart, and summons it to a solemn conference. The skeleton who sits at all feasts,—though overlooked at most, from long habit,—gets power on this day to wave his hand, and points emphatically, with his “slow-moving finger,” to the long record whose burthen is “passing away !” The handwriting of Time comes visibly out upon the wall ; and the spirit pauses to read its lessons, and take an account of the wrecks which it registers, and the changes which it announces. Properly speak-

ing, every day is the commencement of a new year, and the termination of an old one ; but it is only—as we have said at the beginning of this book,—by these emphatic markings, that man is attracted to a consideration of a fact, whose daily recurrence at once makes its weighty importance, and causes it to be forgotten, as if it were of none !

But on this particular day, no man fails to remember that—

“ Again the silent wheels of time  
Their annual round have driven ;”—

and how solemn are the reflections which suggest themselves to him who casts his eye over the space of a year,—in a spirit which can look beyond his own personal share in its doings, and embrace the wide human interests that such a retrospect includes ! “ What a mighty sum of events,” says that excellent writer, William Howitt, “ has been consummated !—what a tide of passions and affections has flowed !—what lives and deaths have alternately arrived !—what destinies have been fixed for ever ! \* \* \* \*  
Once more, our planet has completed one of those journeys in the heavens which perfect all the fruitful changes of its peopled surface, and mete out the few stages of our existence ; and every day—every hour of that progress has, in all her wide lands, in all her million hearts, left traces that eternity shall behold.” Oh ! blessed they and rich (beyond all other blessedness and all other wealth which “ Time’s effacing fingers ” may have left them), who, on the last night of the year, can turn from reviews like these, to sleep upon the pillow of a good conscience—though that pillow should be moistened—aye ! steeped—in their tears !

No doubt it is in the name of his own private affections that man is first summoned to that review, which the wise will end by thus extending ;—and the first reckoning which each will naturally take, is that of the treasures which may have been lost or gained to himself, in the year which is about to close. Through many, many a heart, that summons rings in the low, sweet mournful voice of some beloved one, whom, in that bereaving space, we have laid in the “ narrow house ;” and then it will happen (for man is covetous of his griefs, when his attention is once called to them), that the ghost which took him out into the churchyard

to visit its own tomb, will end by carrying him round its dreary precincts, and showing him all the graves that he has planted, from his childhood. There *will* be hours on a day like this, to many—and, in some year or another, to most—when the cheerful hopes which are, also, of the natural spirit of the season, would contend in vain with the memories which it conjures up, but for that furthest and brightest hope which lies beyond the rest,—and which is, at this moment, typified and shadowed forth, by the returning sun and the renewing year.

We cannot refrain from pausing here, to quote for our readers a few exquisite and affecting lines, written in the seventeenth century, by Henry King, Bishop of Chichester, to one such beloved remembrancer,—and in the cheering spirit of that same precious hope. We fancy they are very little known.—

“ Sleep on, my love ! in thy cold bed,  
Never to be disquieted !  
My last ‘ good night ! ’—thou wilt not wake,  
Till I thy fate shall overtake ;  
Till age, or grief, or sickness, must  
Marry my body to that dust  
It so much loves,—and fill the room  
My heart keeps empty in thy tomb.  
Stay for me there !—I will not faile  
To meet thee in that hollow vale :—  
And think not much of my delay,  
I am already on the way,  
And follow thee with all the speed  
Desire can make, or sorrows breed.  
Each minute is a short degree,  
And every houre a step tow’rds thee :—  
At night, when I betake to rest,  
Next morn I rise nearer my West  
Of life, almost by eight houres’ sail,  
Than when sleep breathed his drowsy gale ! ”

There are, in the last volume of poems published by Mr. Tennyson, some beautiful verses,—in which the natural thoughts that inevitably haunt this season of change are touchingly expressed—as they arise even in the young breast of one for whom “ seasons and their change ” are immediately about to be no more. We are in a mood which tempts us to extract them,—



“ If you're waking, call me early, call me early, mother dear,  
For I would see the sun rise upon the glad New-year—  
It is the last New-year that I shall ever see,  
Then ye may lay me low i' the mould, and think no more o' me

To-night I saw the sun set ; he set and left behind  
The good old year, the dear old time, and all my peace of mind ;  
And the New-year's coming up, mother, but I shall never see  
The may upon the blackthorn, the leaf upon the tree.

Last May we made a crown of flowers : we had a merry day :  
Beneath the hawthorn on the green they made me Queen of May ;  
And we danced about the maypole, and in the hazel-copse,  
Till Charles's wain came out above the tall white chimney-tops.

There's not a flower on all the hills : the frost is on the pane :  
I only wish to live till the snowdrops come again :  
I wish the snow would melt and the sun come out on high—  
I long to see a flower so before the day I die.

The building rook 'ill caw from the windy tall elm tree,  
And the tufted plover pipe along the fallow lea,  
And the swallow 'ill come back again with summer o'er the wave,  
But I shall lie alone, mother, within the mouldering grave.

Upon the chancel-casement, and upon that grave of mine,  
In the early, early morning the summer sun 'll shine,  
Before the red cock crows from the farm upon the hill,  
When you are warm asleep, mother, and all the world is still.

When the flowers come again, mother, beneath the waning light,  
Ye'll never see me more in the long grey fields at night ;  
When from the dry dark world the summer airs blow cool,  
On the oat-grass and the sword-grass, and the bullrush in the pool.

Ye'll bury me, my mother, just beneath the hawthorn shade,  
And ye'll come sometimes and see me where I am lowly laid,  
I shall not forget ye, mother, I shall hear ye when ye pass,  
With your feet above my head in the long and pleasant grass.

I have been wild and wayward, but ye'll forgive me now :  
Ye'll kiss me, my own mother, upon my cheek and brow ;  
Nay,—nay, ye must not weep, nor let your grief be wild,  
Ye should not fret for me, mother, ye have another child.

If I can, I'll come again, mother, from out my resting-place ;  
Tho' ye'll not see me, mother, I shall look upon your face ;  
Tho' I cannot speak a word, I shall hearken what ye say,  
And be often—often with ye when ye think I'm far away.

Good night! good night! when I have said good night for evermore,  
And ye see me carried out from the threshold of the door,  
Don't let Effie come to see me till my grave be growing green;  
She'll be a better child to you than ever I have been.

She'll find my garden tools upon the granary floor;  
Let her take 'em—they are her's,—I shall never garden more:  
But tell her, when I'm gone, to train the rosebush that I set,  
About the parlor window, and the box of mignonette.

Good night, sweet mother! call me when it begins to dawn:  
All night I lie awake, but I fall asleep at morn;  
But I would see the sun rise upon the glad New year,  
So, if you're waking, call me, call me early, mother dear!"

And it is wholesome that the mournful reflections which the period suggests *should* be indulged—but not to the neglect of its more cheerful influences. The New Year's Eve is, in all quarters, looked upon as a time of rejoicing; and perhaps no night of this merry season is more universally dedicated to festivity. Men are, for the most part, met in groups, to hail the coming year with propitiatory honors; and copious libations are poured to its honor, as if to determine it to look upon us with a benignant aspect. We generally spend *our* New Year's Eve in some such group; but, we confess, it is not every class of wassailers that will suit us for the occasion. The fact is, after all our resolves to work up our minds to the pitch of gladness—aye, and notwithstanding our *success*, too,—there are *other* feelings that *will* intrude, in spite of us; and we like to find ourselves a party where their presence is not looked upon as a marrer of the revels. When fitly associated for such a night, we find the very feelings in question, for the most part, to harmonize very delightfully with the predominant spirit of the time,—producing a sort of mixed sensation which is full of luxury and tenderness. By-the-by, we have no great wish to have for our companion, at any time, those precisians who insist greatly on the *external* solemnities. "Ye are sae grave, nae doubt ye're wise," says Burns. But, for ourselves, gentlemen, our sympathies lie with those who can be made to understand that the garb of even folly may, by possibility, be at times worn by those who conceal beneath it more sickness of the heart, as well as more wisdom, than shall ever be dreamt of in *your* philosophy:—who know, in fact, that that same folly is,

sometimes, the very saddest thing in the world ;—that the jingle of the cap and bells is, too often, but a vain device, like that of the ancient Corybantes, to drown the “ still small ” sounds whose wailing is yet heard over all.

And on the night before us, of all nights in the year, the smile and the laugh go freely round—but, ever and anon, there is, as it were, the echo of a far sigh. A birth, in which we have a mighty interest, is about to take place,—but every now and then comes to the heart the impression of low whispering and soft treading, in the back-ground—as of those who wait about a death-bed. We are in a state of divided feelings, somewhat resembling his whose joy, at the falling of a rich inheritance, is dashed by tender recollections of the friend by whose departure it came. Let Mr. Tennyson explain for us, why this so :—

Full knee-deep lies the winter snow,  
And the winter winds are wearily sighing :  
Toll ye the church-bell sad and slow,  
And tread softly and speak low,  
For the old year lies a-dying.  
    Old year, you must not die.  
    You came to us so readily,  
    You lived with us so steadily,  
    Old year, you shall not die.

He lieth still : he doth not move :  
He will not see the dawn of day.  
He hath no other life above.  
He gave me a friend, and a true true-love,  
And the New-year will take 'em away.  
    Old year, you must not go.  
    So long as you have been with us,  
    Such joy as you have seen with us,  
    Old year, you shall not go !

He frothed his bumpers to the brim ;  
A jollier year we shall not see.  
But tho' his eyes are waxing dim,  
And tho' his foes speak ill of him,  
He was a friend to me !  
    Old year, you shall not die.  
    We did so laugh and cry with you,  
    I've half a mind to die with you,  
    Old year, if you *must* die.

He was full of joke and jest,  
 But all his merry quips are o'er.  
 To see him die, across the waste  
 His son and heir doth ride post-haste,  
 But he'll be dead before !  
     Every one for his own !  
 The night is starry and cold, my friend,  
 And the New-year, blithe and bold, my friend,  
 Comes up to take his own.

How hard he breathes !—over the snow,  
 I heard just now the crowing cock.  
 The shadows flicker to and fro ;  
 The cricket chirps ; the light burns low :  
 'Tis nearly one\* o'clock.  
     Shake hands, before you die.  
     Old year, we'll dearly rue for you.  
     What is it we can do for you ?—  
     Speak out before you die !

His face is growing sharp and thin.  
 Alack ! our friend is gone !  
 Close up his eyes : tie up his chin :  
 Step from the corpse, and let *him* in  
 That standeth there alone,  
     And waiteth at the door.  
     There's a new foot on the floor, my friend,  
     And a new face at the door, my friend,  
     A new face at the door !

Occasionally, too, there will come a thought across us, in these hours, which *cannot* be made to harmonize with the feelings we are seeking to encourage,—and has the unpleasing effect of a discord. It is felt, at times, for instance, to be a sort of indecency that we should be looking out merrily for the new year, when the old one is perishing by our side,—and, for an instant, the heart's joyous issues are thrown back upon it. And then, again, the looker forward to hail the “coming guest,” will suddenly fix his eyes upon the veil which shrouds that face ; and the chill of a moment will creep over his heart, as he speculates on what it may conceal,—or, gazing on the sealed book which the New-Year carries in his hand, asks himself how many of those who

sit with him, on this night, about the social table, may have their names written in its last page ! Thoughts like these, however, are instantly treated like informers,—and ducked, as they deserve to be, in the wassail-bowl.

But, in any case, we have never failed to observe that, as the midnight hour draws near, a hush falls upon these assemblies ;—and when men rise to usher in the new comer, it is, for the most part, in silence. We do not believe *that* moment is ever a merry one. The blithe spirits of the night stand still. The glasses are full ;—but so is the heart—and the eye is strained upon the finger of the dial whose notes are to sound the arrival, as if held there by a spell. We believe that few men could turn their faces away from the dial, even by an effort ;—and he who could would be out of place in any assembly of which we made one—unless we were out of place ourselves. The instant the solemn sounds of the midnight chime have ceased, the bells from a thousand steeples lift up their merry voices—but they never, at that moment, found a true echo in *our* hearts ; and the shout which rises from the wassail table, in answer, has ever seemed to us to want much of the mirth to which it makes such boisterous pretension.

But this oppressive sensation soon passes away ;—and the glad bells of the spirit, like those of the steeples, ring freely out. When the old year is fairly withdrawn—when we have ceased to hear the sound of the falling earth upon its coffin lid—when the heir stands absolutely in our presence, and the curtain which hides his features has begun slowly to rise (while the gazer on that curtain can discover, as yet, nothing of the dark things that lie behind—and the hopes which the new year brings are seen through it, by their own light)—then does the heart shake off all that interfered with its hearty enjoyment,—and then “comes in the sweet o’ the night !” It will be late, we promise you, before we separate. One song to the past ! and then, “shall we set about some revels ?”—as our old friend, Sir Andrew, hath it—

“Here’s to the year that’s awa !

We’ll drink it, in strong and in sma’ ;

And to each bonny lassie that we dearly loo’d,

In the days o’ the year that’s awa’ !

Here's to the soldier who bled !  
 To the sailor who bravely did fa' !  
 O ! their fame shall remain, though their spirits are fled,  
 On the wings o' the year that's awa' !

Here's to the friend we can trust,  
 When the sorrows of adversity blow ;  
 Who can join in our song, and be nearest our heart,  
 Nor depart—like the year that's awa' !”

And now are we in the humor, this New-Year's morning, for keeping such vigils as they did in Illyria :—for “ were we ” too “ not born under Taurus !” No advocates do we mean to be for those whose zeal in symposiack matters, like that of Bardolph, “ burns in their noses :”—but occasions there are—and this is one—when we hold it lawful to sound the wassail-bowl to some considerable depth. Like honest Isaac Walton, we love to keep within the bounds of “ such mirth as does not make friends ashamed to look on one another next morning ;”—but we feel that we may venture to be a little intemperate, in the present instance,—and yet hold our heads up, even if we should chance to meet one of those gentry whom Burns presumes to be wise, because they “ are sae grave.” What says Innocentius ?—and he was a father of the church !—“ *Fœcundi calices quem non fecere disertum ?*” “ Carry Master Silence to bed !” therefore,—for we are about to be talkative, and expect to be answered. No man need sit with us longer than he likes : but it is the opening of another year, and *we* must see more of it. We find much virtue in Sir Toby's excellent reasoning, that “ not to be a-bed after midnight, is to be up betimes ;”—and have no sympathy for those who would insist to-day with the stolid Sir Andrew, that “ to be up late is to be up late.” “ A false conclusion !” says Sir Toby ; and so say we. So fill the glasses, once more, from the wassail-bowl,—and let us “ rouse the night-owl in” another “ catch !”

But, alas ! it is later than we thought,—and the owl is gone to bed ; for we hear the cry of that other bird whom Herrick calls “ the Bellman of the night :”—

“ Hark ! the cock crows, and yon bright star  
 Tells us the day himself's not far :

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And see ! where, breaking from the night,  
He gilds the eastern hills with light !”

Honest Master Cotton had evidently been sitting up all night himself, when he wrote these lines :—and being therefore a boon companion, and a true observer of Christmas proprieties, we will take his warning, and to bed ourselves. So “a good new year to you, my masters ! and many of them !”—as the bellman (not Herrick’s) says, on this morning.

## NEW YEAR'S DAY.

1ST JANUARY.



THE first of January, forming the accomplishment of the eight days after the birth of Christ, has been sometimes called the octave of Christmas;—and is celebrated in our church services, as the day of the Circumcision.

Of this day we have little left to say ;—almost all that belongs to it having been, of necessity, anticipated, in the progress of those remarks which have brought us up to it. It is a day of universal congratulation ; and one on which, so far as we may judge from external signs, a general expansion of the heart takes place. Even they who have no hearts to open—or hearts which are not opened by such ordinary occasions—adopt the phraseology of those whom *all* genial hints call into sympathy with their fellow-creatures : and the gracious compliments of the season may be heard falling from lips on which they must surely wither, in the very act of passing.

Of new year's gifts—which are the distinguishing feature of this day—we have already said enough, in pointing out the distinction betwixt them and Christmas-boxes. They still pass generally from friend to friend, and between the different members of a family ; and are, in such cases, very pleasant remembrancers :—but the practice, in ancient times, had some very objectionable features. It was formerly customary for the nobles, and those about the court, to make presents, on this day, to the sovereign ;—who, if he were a prince with anything like a princely mind, took care that the returns which he made, in kind, should at least balance the cost to the subject. The custom, however, became a serious tax when the nobles had to do with a



sovereign of another character ; and in Elizabeth's day, it was an affair of no trifling expense to maintain ground as a courtier. The lists of the *kind* of gifts which she exacted from all who approached her (for the necessity of giving—the consequences of not giving—amounted to an exaction), and the accounts of the childish eagerness with which she turned over the wardrobe finery, furnished in great abundance—as the sort of gift most suited to her capacity of appreciation—furnish admirable illustrations of her mind. She is said to have taken good care that her returns should leave a very substantial balance in her own favor. The practice is said to have been extinguished in the reign of George III.

A worse custom still, however, was that of presenting gifts to the Chancellor, by suitors in his court,—for the purpose of influencing his judgments. The abuses of the new-year's-gift practice, have, however, been cleared away ;—and have left it what it now is,—a beautiful form for the interchange of affection, and the expression of friendship.

In Paris—where this day is called the *Jour d'étrennes*,—the practice is of still more universal observance than with us : and the streets are brilliant with the displays, made in every window, of the articles which are to furnish these tokens of kindness,—and with the gay equipages, and well-dressed pedestrians, passing in all directions, to be the bearers of them, and offer the compliments which are appropriate to the season. The thousand bells of the city are pealing from its hundred belfries—filling the air with an indescribable sense of festival,—and would alone set the whole capital in motion, if they were a people that ever sat still. This singing of a thousand bells is likewise a striking feature of the day, in London :—and no one, who has not heard the mingling voices of these high choristers, in a metropolis, can form any notion of the wild and stirring effects produced by the racing and crossing, and mingling of their myriad notes. It is as if the glad voices of the earth had a chorus of echoes, in the sky ;—as if the spirit of its rejoicing were caught up by “airy tongues,”—and flung, in a cloud of incense-like music, to the gates of heaven.

We need scarcely mention that most of the other forms in which the mirth of the season exhibits itself, are in demand on this oc-

casion ;—and that, among the merry evenings of the Christmas-tide, not the least merry is that which closes New-year's day. To the youngsters of society, that day and eve have probably been the most trying of all ; and the strong excitements of a happy spirit drive the weary head to an earlier pillow than the young heart of this season at all approves. But his is the weariness that the sweet sleep of youth so surely recruits ; and to-morrow shall see him early a-foot,—once more engaged in those winter amusements which are to form his resource, till the novelties of Twelfth-day arrive.—

“ There will come an eve to a longer day,  
That will find thee tired—but not of play :—  
And thou wilt lean, as thou leanest now,  
With drooping limbs and an aching brow ;  
And wish the shadows would faster creep,  
And long to go to thy quiet sleep !—  
Well were it then if thine aching brow  
Were as free from sin and shame as now !”

## TWELFTH DAY, AND TWELFTH NIGHT.

6TH JANUARY.

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TWELFTH-DAY (so called from its being the twelfth after Christmas-day), is that on which the festival of the Epiphany is held. This feast of the Christian church was instituted, according to Picart, in the fourth century, to commemorate the manifestation of our Saviour to the Gentiles; and the name Epiphany (*Επιφάνεια*), which signifies an appearance from above, was given to it, in allusion to the star described in Holy Writ, as the guide of the Magi, or wise men, to the cradle of the blessed Infant. "In Italy," says Mr. Leigh Hunt, "the word has been corrupted into Bessania or Befana (as in England it used to be called Piffany); and Befana, in some parts of that country, has come to mean an old fairy or Mother Bunch,—whose figure is carried about the streets, and who rewards or punishes children at night, by putting sweetmeats or stones and dirt, into a stocking, hung up for the purpose, near the bed's head. The word Befia, taken from this, familiarly means a trick or mockery put upon any one; to such base uses may come the most splendid terms!" But what is quite as extraordinary as that the primitive signification of a word, not familiarly understood, should, amid the revolution of centuries, be lost in a different, or distorted into an inferior meaning, is—the preservation, in popular rites, of trivial details; which, as we have before stated, conclusively identify many of the practices of our modern Christian festivals, as echoes of ancient pagan observances. Of this, Twelfth-day presents a remarkable instance.

The more we examine the Saturnalia of the Romans, and compare those revels with the proceedings of our Twelfth-night, the more satisfied do we feel of the correctness of Selden's view.—

“Christmas,” he says, in his Table Talk, “succeeds the Saturnalia; the same time, the same number of holydays. Then, the master waited upon the servant, like the Lord of Misrule.” There is here a general likeness to the season of which we treat; but, as Mr. Brand further states, the Greeks and Romans, at this period, also “drew lots for kingdoms,—and, like kings, exercised their temporary authority;” and Mr. Fosbroke mentions that “the king of Saturnalia was elected by beans,”—which identifies our Twelfth-night characters, as well as our mode of selecting them, with those of the ancients. Through so many centuries has chance decided who should wear a crown! By the French, Twelfth-day was distinguished as “*La Fête des Rois*,”—a name, of course, obnoxious to the revolutionary fraternity of 1792, who caused such feast to be declared anti-civic, and replaced it by “*La Fête des Sans-Culottes*.”

However, before entering upon the important discussion of the “absolute monarchy” of “the king of cakes and characters,”—in which, without any reference to profane ceremonies, there was sufficient found to offend puritanical ideas,—we must be allowed to mention some customs observed on the vigil, or eve, of the feast of the Epiphany. Amongst these, was the practice of wassailing the trees, to insure their future fruitfulness,—mentioned by Herrick:—

“Wassaile the trees, that they may beare
You many a plum, and many a peare;
For more or lesse fruits they will bring,
As you do give them wassailing.”

The merry bowl which (notwithstanding that it had been so often drained) was still kept brimming throughout all the Christmas holidays,—was now, when they were drawing to a close, actually flowing over; and the warm heart and jovial spirit of the season, not content with pledging all those who could drink in return, proceeded to an excess of boon-companionship,—and, after quaffing a wassail draught to the health and abundant bearing of some favorite fruit-tree, poured what remained in the cup upon the root, as a libation to its strength and vitality. Here, also, we cannot fail to recognize the rites of classical times, lurking in the

superstitions used in the cider districts of England. A pleasant custom of this kind is mentioned in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for 1791, as existing in certain parts of Devonshire. It is there stated, that "the farmer, attended by his workmen, with a large pitcher of cider, goes to the orchard on this evening; and there, encircling one of the best bearing trees, they drink the following toast three times :—

" Here's to thee, old apple tree !
 Whence thou mayst bud, and whence thou mayst blow !
 And whence thou mayst bear apples enow !
 Hats full ! caps full !
 Bushel, bushel-sacks full !
 And my pockets full too !—Huzza !"

This done, they return to the house, the doors of which they are sure to find bolted by the females; who, be the weather what it may, are inexorable to all entreaties to open them, till some one has guessed at what is on the spit,—which is generally some nice little thing difficult to be hit on, and is the reward of him who first names it. The doors are then thrown open; and the lucky clod-pole receives the tit-bit, as a recompense. Some," it is added, "are so superstitious as to believe that, if they neglect this custom, the trees will bear no apples that year."

" Health to thee, good apple tree !
 Well to bear, pockets-full, hats-full,
 Pecks-full, bushel-bags-full,"—

is another version of the address used on these occasions, preserved by Brand. We find recorded, in one quarter or another, a variety of analogous and other customs, observed, in different parts of England, on this vigil :—but our diminishing space will not permit us to enter upon a description of them.

During the entire twelve months, there is no such illumination of pastry-cooks' shops, as on Twelfth-night. Each sends forth a blaze of light; and is filled with glorious cakes,—“decorated,” to use the words of Mr. Hone, “with all imaginable images of things animate and inanimate. Stars, castles, kings, cottages, dragons, trees, fish, palaces, cats, dogs, churches, lions, milk-

maids, knights, serpents, and innumerable other forms, in snow-white confectionary, painted with variegated colors.”—“This ‘paradise of dainty devices,’” he continues, “is crowded by successive, and successful, desirers of the seasonable delicacies ; while alternate tappings of hammers and peals of laughter, from the throng surrounding the house, excite smiles from the inmates.” This last observation requires explanation, for our country readers.

Let all the idle gazers, then, in the streets of London, beware of Twelfth-night ! There is, then, that spirit of mischievous fun abroad, which—carried on without the superintending power of a Lord of Misrule—exhibits itself in transfixing the coat-skirts of the unconscious stranger to the frame of the door or window, at which he may have paused, to stare and wonder. Once fairly caught, lucky is the wight who can disengage himself, without finding that, in the interim, his other skirt has been pinned to the pelisse or gown of some alarmed damsel—whose dress is perhaps dragged, at the same moment, in opposite directions ; so that he can neither stand still, nor move, without aiding the work of destruction. These practical facetiæ are the performances of that class of nondescript lads, “perplexers of Lord Mayors and irritators of the police,” whose character Mr. Leigh Hunt has as truly drawn as our artist has depicted their persons : “—— those equivocal animal-spirits of the streets, who come whistling along, you know not whether thief or errand-boy,—sometimes with a bundle and sometimes not,—in corduroys, a jacket, and a cap or bit of hat, with hair sticking through a hole in it. His vivacity gets him into scrapes in the street ; and he is not ultra-studious of civility in his answers. If the man he runs against is not very big, he gives him abuse for abuse, at once ; if otherwise, he gets at a convenient distance, and then halloos out, ‘Eh, stupid !’ or ‘Can’t you see before you ?’ or ‘Go and get your face washed !’ This last is a favorite saying of his, out of an instinct referable to his own visage. He sings ‘Hokee-Pokee,’ and ‘A shiny Night,’—varied, occasionally, with an uproarious ‘Rise, gentle Moon,’ or ‘Coming through the Rye.’ On winter evenings, you may hear him indulging himself, as he goes along, in a singular undulation of yowl ;—a sort of gargle—

as if a wolf was practising the rudiments of a shake. This he delights to do, more particularly, in a crowded thoroughfare,—as though determined that his noise should triumph over every other, and show how jolly he is, and how independent of the ties to good behavior. If the street is a quiet one, and he has a stick in his hand (perhaps a hoop-stick), he accompanies the howl with a run upon the gamut of the iron rails. He is the nightingale of mud and cold. If he gets on in life, he will be a pot-boy. At present, as we said before, we hardly know what he is; but his mother thinks herself lucky, if he is not transported.”

Of Twelfth-night, at home,—when “the whole island keeps court,—nay all Christendom,”—when “all the world are kings and queens, and everybody is somebody else”—a huge cake, the idol of young hearts, is the presiding genius of the evening. The account given by Nutt, the editor of the “Cook and Confectioner’s Dictionary,” of the twelfth-cakes and dishes in vogue a hundred years ago, proves the nursery rhymes of—

“Four and twenty blackbirds baked in a pye,

(who)

When the pye was opened, all began to sing,”

to be no such nonsense as was generally supposed. He tells us of two great pies, made of coarse paste and bran,—into one of which, after it was baked, live frogs were introduced,—and into the other, live birds; which, upon some curious persons lifting up the covers, would jump and fly about the room, causing “a surprising and diverting hurly-burly among the guests.” What feeble imitations are the castles, ships, and animals, that now adorn our Twelfth-night cakes, to the performance of Nutt! How much, every way, inferior are the specimens of art produced, even by the renowned author of the “Italian Confectioner,”—the illustrious Jarrin! On the battlements of the castles of former days were planted “kexes,” or pop-guns, charged with gunpowder, to be fired upon a pastry ship, with “masts,” ropes, we doubt not, of spun sugar, “sails, flags, and streamers.” Nor was the naval power of England lost sight of; for the “kexes” of this delicious ship were, also, charged with gunpowder,—and when she was fired upon from the castle, her guns

were able to return the salute. Then, to take off the smell of the powder, there were egg shells, filled with rose-water, for the spectators to break, "and throw at one another." Nor must a stag of pastry, filled with claret, be forgotten; which, when wounded, poured forth its blood, free and sparkling as a ruby, for those whose nerves were delicate, and needed the refreshment of a glass of wine. Such were the "subtilties," as these jugglings in confectionary are called, which we now behold represented by the painted figures, "so bad to eat, but so fine to look at," that adorn our twelfth-cakes.

"How to eat twelfth-cake," says Hone, "requires no recipe; but how to provide it, and draw the characters, on the authority of Rachel Revel's 'Winter Evening Pastimes,' may be acceptable. First, buy your cake. Then, before your visitors arrive, buy your characters,—each of which should have a pleasant verse beneath. Next, look at your invitation list, and count the number of ladies you expect, and afterwards the number of gentlemen. Then, take as many female characters as you have invited ladies; fold them up exactly of the same size, and number each on the back; taking care to make the king No. 1, and the Queen No. 2. Then, prepare and number the gentlemen's characters. Cause tea and coffee to be handed to your visitors, as they drop in. When all are assembled, and tea over, put as many ladies' characters in a reticule as there are ladies present; next, put the gentlemen's characters in a hat. Then call on a gentleman to carry the reticule to the ladies as they sit; from which each lady is to draw one ticket, and to preserve it unopened. Select a lady to bear the hat to the gentlemen, for the same purpose. There will be one ticket left in the reticule, and another in the hat,—which the lady and gentleman who carried each is to interchange, as having fallen to each. Next, arrange your visitors, according to their numbers;—the king No. 1, the queen No. 2, and so on. The king is then to recite the verse on his ticket; then the queen the verse on hers; and so the characters are to proceed, in numerical order. This done, let the cake and refreshments go round; and hey! for merriment!"

As *our* contribution towards the merriment of this evening, we cannot do better than present our readers with a copy of the fol-

lowing letter, respecting the manufacture of Twelfth-night characters ;—which document was handed to us by the artist to whom it was addressed.—

“SIR,

“As I am given to understand that you are an artist of celebrity, I will thank you to make me a hundred and forty-four different characters, for Twelfth-night, the entire cost not to exceed two shillings and sixpence each, say three plates at two pounds ten shillings a plate, including the poetry, which you can, I am told, get plenty of poets to write for nothing, though I should not mind standing a trifle—say twopence more, if the verses gave satisfaction. You will please do your best for me, and, trusting to your speedy attention to this order, I will remain your well-wisher and obedient servant, who will furnish the coppers.”

Though we publish this letter, that is no reason why we should publish the writer's name. It is evident, he was a young hand in the trade ; and desirous to rival the graphic and literary talent displayed in Langley's and Fairburn's characters,—of which we have preserved specimens, in our portfolio. Mr. Sandys speaks rather disparagingly of the merit of these productions ; and this, considering that gentleman's antiquarian zeal, we must confess, surprises us. In the copy of Langley's characters which we possess, the same love of alliteration, upon which we have already commented, as encouraged in the Court of Misrule, is observable. We have, for instance, “Bill Bobstay,”—“Prudence Pumpkin,”—“Percival Palette,”—“Judy Juniper,”—“Peter Punccheon,”—“Simon Salamander,”—“Countess Clackett,”—“Leander Lackbrain,”—“Nelly Nester,”—“Felicia Frill,” &c., &c.

Where the monarch of the evening and his queen are not determined by this kind of pictorial lottery, a bean and a pea are put into the cake ; and whoever finds them, in the pieces they take, become the king and queen of the evening. Other matters—such as a small coin, a ring, &c.—are often introduced into Twelfth-night cakes ; and give to the finders characters to be supported for the evening. In some countries, says Sandys, a coin was put “instead of the bean ; and portions of the cake assigned to the Virgin Mary, and the Three Kings, which

were given to the poor ; and if the bean should happen to be in any of these portions, the king was then chosen by pulling straws."

The three kings mentioned in the above extract, are those worthies commonly known by the title of the Three Kings of Colen (Cologne),—identified, by old legends, with the wise men of the east, who did homage to our Saviour, on the day of which the Epiphany is the anniversary celebration. They are stated to have been Arabians ; and are distinguished in the traditionary tales of the early church, by the names of Melchior, Balthazar, and Gasper. Their bodies are said to have been finally deposited at Cologne, after several removals ;—and the practice of electing a king, on the evening of the Epiphany, has been, by some, thought to have a reference to their supposed regal characters. We imagine, however, it will be sufficiently evident to our readers, after what we have formerly said, that it is not necessary for us to seek further than we have already done, for the origin of the Twelfth-night king.

SAINT DISTAFF'S DAY.

7TH JANUARY.



CONCLUSION.

THE day which precedes this is, as we have already informed our readers, the last of the twelve days which constitute what is, emphatically, the Christmas season ;—and with the revelries of Twelfth-night, the general holiday is, in strictness, considered to be at an end. As, however, we found it necessary to approach the throng of its celebrations with some degree of preparation—to pass through some of its lighted antechambers, before we ventured to trust our eyes amid the blaze of the temple itself—so also, we dare not step, at once, from its thousand lights, into the common air of the every-day world, without a previous subjecting of our imaginations to the diminished glare of the outer chambers which lie on this other side. And this it is the more incumbent on us to do—because the revellers, whose proceedings it is our business to describe, take the same course, in returning to the business of life.

It is not, as we have said, to be expected that, after the full chorus of increased mirth which hath swelled up anew for the last of these celebrations, the ear should all at once accustom itself to a sudden and utter silence—should endure the abrupt absence of all festival sound :—nor can all the laughing spirits of the season, who were engaged, in added numbers, for the revelries of last night, be got quietly laid at rest, in the course of a single day. One or other of them are, accordingly, found lurking about the corners of our chambers, after the ceremonies, for which they are called up, are over—encouraged to the neglect of the order

for their dismissal, by the young hearts who have formed a merry alliance with the imps, which they are by no means willing to terminate thus suddenly. And, sooth to say, those youngsters are often able to engage heads who are older—and, we suppose, should know better—in the conspiracies which are, day by day, formed, for the detention of some one or more of these members of the train of Momus.

Even in rural districts—where the necessary preparations in aid of the returning season are, by this time, expected to call men abroad to the labors of the field—our benevolent ancestors admitted the claim for a gradual subsiding of the Christmas mirth, in favor of the children of toil. Their devices for letting themselves gently down were recognized ;—and a sort of compromise was sanctioned between the spirit of the past holyday, and the sense of an important coming duty to be performed. The genius of mirth met the genius of toil, on neutral ground, for a single day ; and the two touched hands, in recognition of the rightful dominion of each other—ere they, severally, set forth, in their own separate directions.

✓ Thus, on the day which followed Twelfth-night, the implements of labor were prepared, and the team was even yoked, for a space ;—but the business of turning the soil was not required to be laboriously engaged in, until the Monday which followed—and which, therefore, bore (and bears) the title of Plough Monday. After a few hours of morning labor, a sort of half-holiday was the concluding privilege of this privileged season ;—and the husbandman laid aside his plough, and the maiden her distaff, to engage in certain revels which were peculiar to the day, and to the country districts. From the partial resumption of the spinning labors of the women, on this morning, the festival in question takes its name ;—and it is (or was) sometimes called, also, “Rockday,” in honor of the rock,—which is another name for the distaff. It is described as being “a distaff held in the hand, from whence wool is spun, by twirling a ball below.”

Of the sports by which this day was enlivened, we doubt if there are any remains. These seem to have consisted in the burning—by the men who had returned from the field—of the flax and tow belonging to the women—as a sort of assertion of

the supremacy of the spirit of fun over his laborious rival, for this one day more—and a challenge into his court:—and this challenge was answered by the maidens, and the mischief retorted, by sluicing the clowns with pails of water. It was, in fact, a merry contest between these two elements, of water and of fire;—and may be looked upon as typical of that more matter-of-fact extinction, which was about to be finally given to the lights of the season, when the sports of this day should be concluded. Herrick's poem, on the subject—which we must quote from the "*Hesperides*,"—includes all that is known of the ancient observances of St. Distaff's day.—

"Partly work and partly play,
You must on S. Distaff's day;
From the plough soone free your teame,
Then come home and fother them,
If the maides a spinning goe,
Burne the flax, and fire the tow;

* * * *

Bring in pailles of water then,
Let the maides bewash the men:—
Give S. Distaffe all the right,
Then bid Christmas sport good-night:
And next morrow, every one
To his own vocation."

OUR REVELS NOW ARE ENDED;—and our Christmas prince must abdicate. In flinging down his wand of misrule, we trust there is no reason why he should—like Prospero, when his charms were over, and he broke his staff—drown this, his book, "deeper than did ever plummet sound." The spells which it contains are, we believe, all innocent;—and we trust it may survive, to furnish the directions for many a future scheme of Christmas happiness.

And now Father Christmas has, at length, departed;—but not till the youngsters had got from the merry old man his last *bon-bon*. The school-boy, too, has clung to the skirts of the patriarch's coat, and followed him as far as he could. And farther

had *he* gone—but for a clear and undoubted vision of a dark object, which has been looming suspiciously through the gloom for some weeks past. He first caught a glimpse of it, on stepping out from amongst the lights of Twelfth-night ; but he turned his head, resolutely, away—and has since looked as little in that direction as he could. But there is no evading it now ! There it stands—right in his way—plain, and distinct, and portentous !—the gloomy portal of this merry season—on whose face is inscribed, in characters which there is no mystifying, its own appropriate and unbeloved name—BLACK MONDAY !

And, behold ! at the gloomy gate a hackney coach (more like a mourning coach !—*Black Monday* visible in all its appointments—and black *Friday* (looking blacker than ever this black Monday) frowning from its foot-board !

And, lo ! through its windows, just caught in the distance, the last flutter of the coat-tails of old Father Christmas !—

OUR REVELS ARE, indeed, ENDED !

THE END.

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HEROD. vii., 58.

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P R E F A C E

ADDRESSED BY

THE AUTHOR TO ONE OF HIS FRIENDS.

WHEN you first entertained the idea of travelling in the East, you asked me to send you an outline of the tour which I had made, in order that you might the better be able to choose a route for yourself. In answer to this request, I gave you a large French map, on which the course of my journeys had been carefully marked ; but I did not conceal from myself, that this was rather a dry mode for a man to adopt, when he wished to impart the results of his experience to a dear and intimate friend. Now, long before the period of your planning an Oriental tour, I had intended to write some account of my Eastern Travels. I had, indeed, begun the task, and had failed ; I had begun it a second time, and failing again, had abandoned my attempt with a sensation of utter distaste. I was unable to speak out, and chiefly, I think, for this reason—that I knew not to whom I was speaking. It might be you, or, perhaps, our Lady of Bitterness, who would read my story ; or it might be some member of the Royal Statistical Society, and how on earth was I to write in a way that would do for all three ?

Well—your request for a sketch of my tour suggested to me the idea of complying with your wish by a revival of my twice-abandoned attempt. I tried, and the pleasure and confidence which I felt in speaking to you, soon made my task so easy, and even amusing, that after a while

(though not in time for your tour), I completed the scrawl from which this book was originally printed.

The very feeling, however, which enabled me to write thus freely, prevented me from robing my thoughts in that grave and decorous style which I should have maintained if I had professed to lecture the public. Whilst I feigned to myself that you, and you only, were listening, I could not by possibility speak very solemnly. Heaven forbid that I should talk to my own genial friend, as though he were a great and enlightened Community, or any other respectable Aggregate!

Yet I well understood that the mere fact of my professing to speak to you rather than to the public generally, could not perfectly excuse me for printing a narrative too roughly worded, and accordingly, in revising the proof sheets, I have struck out those phrases which seemed to be less fit for a published volume than for intimate conversation. It is hardly to be expected, however, that correction of this kind should be perfectly complete, or that the almost boisterous tone in which many parts of the book were originally written should be thoroughly subdued. I venture, therefore, to ask, that the familiarity of language still possibly apparent in the work, may be laid to the account of our delightful intimacy, rather than to any presumptuous motive; I feel, as you know, much too timidly—too distantly, and too respectfully, towards the Public, to be capable of seeking to put myself on terms of easy fellowship with strange and casual readers.

It is right to forewarn people (and I have tried to do this as well as I can, by my studiously unpromising title-page*)

* “Eothen” is, I hope, almost the only hard word to be found in the book; it is written in Greek *ἠὼθεν*,—(Atticè, with an aspirated *ε* instead of

that the book is quite superficial in its character. I have endeavored to discard from it all valuable matter derived from the works of others, and it appears to me that my efforts in this direction have been attended with great success; I believe I may truly acknowledge, that from all details of geographical discovery, or antiquarian research—from all display of “sound learning, and religious knowledge”—from all historical and scientific illustrations—from all useful statistics—from all political disquisitions—and from all good moral reflections, the volume is thoroughly free.

My excuse for the book is its truth; you and I know a man fond of hazarding elaborate jokes, who, whenever a story of his happens not to go down as wit, will evade the awkwardness of the failure, by bravely maintaining that all he has said is pure fact. I can honestly take this decent, though humble mode of escape. My narrative is not merely righteously exact in matters of fact (where fact is in question), but it is true in this larger sense—it conveys—not those impressions which *ought to have been* produced upon any “well constituted mind,” but those which were really and truly received at the time of his rambles, by a headstrong, and not very amiable traveller, whose prejudices in favor of other people’s notions were then exceedingly slight. As I have felt, so I have written; and the result is, that there will often be found in my narrative a jarring discord between the associations properly belonging to interesting sites, and the tone in which I speak of them. This seemingly perverse mode of treating the subject is forced upon me by my plan of adhering to sentimental

the *η*),—and signifies, “from the early dawn,”—“from the East.”—*Donn. Lex. 4th edition.*

truth, and really does not result from any impertinent wish to teaze or trifle with readers. I ought, for instance, to have felt as strongly in Judea, as in Galilee, but it was not so in fact ; the religious sentiment (born in solitude) which had heated my brain in the Sanctuary of Nazareth was rudely chilled at the foot of Zion, by disenchanting scenes, and this change is accordingly disclosed by the perfectly worldly tone in which I speak of Jerusalem and Bethlehem.

My notion of dwelling precisely upon those matters which happened to interest me, and upon none other, would of course be intolerable in a regular book of travels. If I had been passing through countries not previously explored, it would have been sadly perverse to withhold careful description of admirable objects, merely because my own feelings of interest in them may have happened to flag ; but where the countries which one visits have been thoroughly and ably described, and even artistically illustrated by others, one is fully at liberty to say as little (though not quite so much) as one chooses. Now a traveller is a creature not always looking at sights—he remembers (how often !) the happy land of his birth—he has, too, his moments of humble enthusiasm about fire and food—about shade and drink ; and if he gives to these feelings anything like the prominence which really belonged to them at the time of his travelling, he will not seem a very good teacher ; once having determined to write the sheer truth concerning the things which chiefly have interested him, he must, and he will, sing a sadly long strain about Self ; he will talk for whole pages together about his bivouac fire, and ruin the Ruins of Baalbec with eight or ten cold lines.

But it seems to me that the egotism of a traveller, however incessant—however shameless and obtrusive, must still convey some true ideas of the country through which he has passed. His very selfishness—his habit of referring the whole external world to his own sensations, compels him, as it were, in his writings, to observe the laws of perspective ;—he tells you of objects, not as he knows them to be, but as they seemed to him. The people and the things that most concern him personally, however mean and insignificant, take large proportions in his picture, because they stand so near to him. He shows you his Dragomen, and the gaunt features of his Arabs—his tent—his kneeling camels—his baggage strewed upon the sand ;—but the proper wonders of the land—the cities—the mighty ruins and monuments of bygone ages he throws back faintly in the distance. It is thus that he felt, and thus he strives to repeat the scenes of the Elder World. You may listen to him for ever without learning much in the way of statistics ; but perhaps if you bear with him long enough, you may find yourself slowly and slightly impressed with the realities of Eastern Travel.

My scheme of refusing to dwell upon matters which failed to interest my own feelings, has been departed from in one instance—namely, in my detail of the late Lady Hester Stanhope's conversation on supernatural topics ; the truth is, that I have been much questioned on this subject, and I thought that my best plan would be to write down at once all that I could ever have to say concerning the personage whose career has excited so much curiosity amongst Englishwomen. The result is, that my account of the lady goes to a length which is not justified either by

the importance of the subject, or by the extent to which it interested the narrator.

You will see that I constantly speak of "my People," "my Party," "my Arabs," and so on, using terms which might possibly seem to imply that I moved about with a pompous retinue. This of course was not the case. I travelled with the simplicity proper to my station, as one of the industrious class, who was not flying from his country because of ennui, but was strengthening his will, and tempering the metal of his nature for that life of toil and conflict in which he is now engaged. But an Englishman journeying in the East, must necessarily have with him Dragomen capable of interpreting the Oriental language; the absence of wheeled-carriages obliges him to use several beasts of burthen for his baggage, as well as for himself and his attendants; the owners of the horses or camels, with *their* slaves or servants, fall in as part of his train, and altogether the cavalcade becomes rather numerous, without, however, occasioning any proportionate increase of expense. When a traveller speaks of all these followers in mass, he calls them his "people," or his "troop," or his "party," without intending to make you believe that he is therefore a Sovereign Prince.

You will see that I sometimes follow the custom of the Scots in describing my fellow-countrymen by the names of their paternal homes.

Of course all these explanations are meant for casual readers. To you, without one syllable of excuse or deprecation, and in all the confidence of a friendship that never yet was clouded, I give this long-promised volume, and add but one sudden "Good-by !" for I dare not stand greeting you here.

E Ò T H E N.

CHAPTER I.

Over the Border.

AT Semlin I still was encompassed by the scenes, and the sounds of familiar life ; the din of a busy world still vexed and cheered me ; the unveiled faces of women still shone in the light of day. Yet, whenever I chose to look southward, I saw the Ottoman's fortress—austere, and darkly impending over the vale of the Danube—historic Belgrade. I had come, as it were, to the end of this wheel-going Europe, and now my eyes would see the Splendor and Havoc of the East.

The two frontier towns are less than a cannon-shot distant, and yet their people hold no communion. The Hungarian on the North, and the Turk and Servian on the southern side of the Save, are as much asunder as though there were fifty broad provinces that lay in the path between them. Of the men that bustled around me in the streets of Semlin, there was not, perhaps, one who had ever gone down to look upon the stranger race which dwells under the walls of that opposite castle. It is the Plague, and the dread of the Plague, which divide the one people from the other. All coming and going stands forbidden by the terrors of the yellow flag. If you dare to break the laws of the quarantine, you will be tried with military haste ; the court will scream out your sentence to you from a tribunal some fifty yards off ; the priest, instead of gently whispering to you the sweet hopes of religion, will console you at

duelling distance, and after that you will find yourself carefully shot, and carelessly buried in the ground of the Lazaretto.

When all was in order for our departure, we walked down to the precincts of the Quarantine Establishment, and here awaited us a "compromised"* officer of the Austrian Government, who lives in a state of perpetual excommunication. The boats, with their "compromised" rowers, were also in readiness.

After coming in contact with any creature or thing belonging to the Ottoman Empire, it would be impossible for us to return to the Austrian territory without undergoing an imprisonment of fourteen days in the odious Lazaretto; we felt, therefore, that before we committed ourselves, it was highly important to take care that none of the arrangements necessary for the journey had been forgotten, and in our anxiety to avoid such a misfortune, we managed the work of departure from Semlin with nearly as much solemnity as if we had been departing this life. Some obliging persons from whom we had received civilities during our short stay in the place, came down to say their farewell at the river's side; and now, as we stood with them at the distance of three or four yards from the "compromised" officer, they asked if we were perfectly certain that we had wound up all our affairs in Christendom, and whether we had no parting requests to make. We repeated the caution to our servants, and took anxious thought lest by any possibility we might be cut off from some cherished object of affection:—were they quite sure that there was no faithful portmanteau—no patient and long-suffering carpet bag—no fragrant dressing-case with its gold-compelling letters of credit from which we might be parting for ever? No—all these our loved ones lay safely stowed in the boat, and we were ready to follow them to the ends of the earth. Now, therefore, we shook hands with our Semlin friends, who immediately retreated for three or four paces, so as to leave us in the centre of a space between them and the "compromised" officer; the latter then advanced, and asking once more

* A "compromised" person is one who has been in contact with people or things supposed to be capable of conveying infection. As a general rule the whole Ottoman empire lies constantly under this terrible ban. The "yellow flag" is the ensign of the Quarantine establishment.

if we had done with the civilized world, held forth his hand—I met it with mine, and there was an end to Christendom for many a day to come.

We soon neared the southern bank of the river, but no sounds came down from the blank walls above, and there was no living thing that we could yet see, except one great hovering bird of the vulture race, flying low, and intent, and wheeling round and round over the Pest-accused city.

But presently there issued from the postern, a group of human beings,—beings with immortal souls, and possibly some reasoning faculties, but to me the grand point was this, that they had real, substantial, and incontrovertible turbans; they made for the point towards which we were steering, and when at last I sprang upon the shore, I heard, and saw myself now first surrounded by men of Asiatic race; I have since ridden through the land of the Osmanlees, from the Servian Border to the Golden Horn,—from the gulph of Satalieh to the tomb of Achilles; but never have I seen such ultra-Turkish looking fellows as those who received me on the banks of the Save; they were men in the humblest order of life, having come to meet our boat in the hope of earning something by carrying our luggage up to the city, but poor though they were, it was plain that they were Turks of the proud old school, and had not yet forgotten the fierce, careless bearing of the once victorious Ottomans.

Though the province of Servia generally has obtained a kind of independence, yet Belgrade, as being a place of strength on the frontier, is still garrisoned by Turkish troops, under the command of a Pasha. Whether the fellows who now surrounded us were soldiers, or peaceful inhabitants, I did not understand; they wore the old Turkish costume; vests and jackets of many brilliant colors divided from the loose petticoat-trowsers by masses of shawl, which were folded in heavy volumes around their waists, so as to give the meagre wearers something of the dignity of true corpulence. The shawl enclosed a whole bundle of weapons; no man bore less than one brace of immensely long pistols, and a yataghan (or cutlass), with a dagger or two, of various shapes and sizes; most of these arms were inlaid with silver, and highly burnished, so that they contrasted

shiningly with the decayed grandeur of the garments to which they were attached (this carefulness of his arms is a point of honor with the Osmanlee, who never allows his bright yataghan to suffer from his own adversity) ; then the long drooping mustachios, and the ample folds of the once white turbans, that lowered over the piercing eyes, and the haggard features of the men, gave them an air of gloomy pride, and that appearance of trying to be disdainful under difficulties, which I have since seen so often in those of the Ottoman people who live, and remember old times ; they seemed as if they were thinking that they would have been more usefully, more honorably, and more piously employed in cutting our throats, than in carrying our portmanteaus. The faithful Steel (Methley's Yorkshire servant) stood aghast for a moment, at the sight of his master's luggage upon the shoulders of these warlike porters, and when at last we began to move up, he could scarcely avoid turning round to cast one affectionate look towards Christendom, but quickly again he marched on with the steps of a man, not frightened exactly, but sternly prepared for death, or the Koran, or even for plural wives.

The Moslem quarter of a city is lonely and desolate ; you go up and down, and on over shelving and hillocky paths through the narrow lanes walled in by blank, windowless dwellings ; you come out upon an open space strewn with the black ruins that some late fire has left ; you pass by a mountain of cast-away things, the rubbish of centuries, and on it you see numbers of big, wolf-like dogs lying torpid under the sun, with limbs outstretched to the full, as if they were dead ; storks, or cranes, sitting fearless upon the low roofs, look gravely down upon you ; the still air that you breathe is loaded with the scent of citron, and pomegranate rinds scorched by the sun, or (as you approach the Bazaar) with the dry, dead perfume of strange spices. You long for some signs of life, and tread the ground more heavily, as though you would wake the sleepers with the heel of your boot ; but the foot falls noiseless upon the crumbling soil of an eastern city, and Silence follows you still. Again and again you meet turbans, and faces of men, but they have nothing for you—no welcome—no wonder—no wrath—no scorn—

they look upon you as we do upon a December's fall of snow—as a “seasonable,” unaccountable, uncomfortable work of God, that may have been sent for some good purpose, to be revealed hereafter.

Some people had come down to meet us with an invitation from the Pasha, and we wound our way up to the castle. At the gates there were groups of soldiers, some smoking, and some lying flat like corpses upon the cool stones; we went through courts, ascended steps, passed along a corridor, and walked into an airy, white-washed room, with an European clock at one end of it, and Moostapha Pasha at the other; the fine, old, bearded potentate looked very like Jove—like Jove, too, in the midst of his clouds, for the silvery fumes of the Narguilè* hung lightly circling round him.

The Pasha received us with the smooth, kind, gentle manner that belongs to well-bred Osmanlees; then he lightly clapped his hands, and instantly the sound filled all the lower end of the room with slaves; a syllable dropped from his lips which bowed all heads, and conjured away the attendants like ghosts (their coming and their going was thus swift and quiet, because their feet were bare, and they passed through no door, but only by the yielding folds of a purdur). Soon the coffee bearers appeared, every man carrying separately his tiny cup in a small metal stand, and presently to each of us there came a pipe-bearer, who first rested the bowl of the tchibouque at a measured distance on the floor, and then, on this axis, wheeled round the long cherry stick, and gracefully presented it on half-bended knee; already the well-kindled fire was glowing secure in the bowl, and so, when I pressed the amber lip to mine, there was no coyness to conquer; the willing fume came up, and answered my slightest sigh, and followed softly every breath inspired, till it touched me with some faint sense and understanding of Asiatic contentment.†

* The Narguilè is a water-pipe upon the plan of the Hookah, but more gracefully fashioned; the smoke is drawn by a very long flexible tube that winds its snake-like way from the vase to the lips of the beatified smoker.

† Fine talking this, you will say, for one who can't smoke a cigar; but ask any Eastern traveller if it is not quite possible to love the tchibouque,

Asiatic contentment! Yet scarcely, perhaps, one hour before, I had been wanting my bill, and ringing for waiters in a shrill and busy hotel.

In the Ottoman dominions there is scarcely any hereditary influence except that which belongs to the family of the Sultan, and wealth, too, is a highly volatile blessing, not easily transmitted to the descendants of the owner. From these causes it results, that the people standing in the place of nobles and gentry, are official personages, and though many (indeed the greater number) of these potentates are humbly born and bred, you will seldom, I think, find them wanting in that polished smoothness of manner, and those well undulating tones which belong to the best Osmanlees. The truth is, that most of the men in authority have risen from their humble stations by the arts of the courtier, and they preserve in their high estate, those gentle powers of fascination to which they owe their success. Yet unless you can contrive to learn a little of the language, you will be rather bored by your visits of ceremony; the intervention of the interpreter, or Dragoman as he is called, is fatal to the spirit of conversation. I think I should mislead you, if I were to attempt to give the substance of any particular conversation with Orientals. A traveller may write and say that, "the Pasha of So-and-So was particularly interested in the vast progress which has been made in the application of steam, and appeared to understand the structure of our machinery—that he remarked upon the gigantic results of our manufacturing industry—showed that he possessed considerable knowledge of our Indian affairs, and of the constitution of the Company, and expressed a lively admiration of the many sterling qualities for which the people of England are distinguished." But the heap of common-places thus quietly attributed to the Pasha, will have been founded perhaps on some such talking as this:—

Pasha.—The Englishman is welcome; most blessed among hours is this, the hour of his coming.

Dragoman (to the Traveller).—The Pasha pays you his compliments.

and the narguilè, without being able to endure the European contrivances for smoking.

Traveller.—Give him my best compliments in return, and say I'm delighted to have the honor of seeing him.

Dragoman (to the Pasha).—His Lordship, this Englishman, Lord of London, Scornor of Ireland, Suppressor of France, has quitted his governments, and left his enemies to breathe for a moment, and has crossed the broad waters in strict disguise, with a small but eternally faithful retinue of followers, in order that he might look upon the bright countenance of the Pasha among Pashas—the Pasha of the everlasting Pashalik of Karaghoolookoldour.

Traveller (to his Dragoman).—What on earth have you been saying about London? The Pasha will be taking me for a mere cockney. Have not I told you *always* to say, that I am from a branch of the family of Mudcombe Park, and that I am to be a magistrate for the county of Bedfordshire, only I've not qualified, and that I should have been a Deputy-Lieutenant, if it had not been for the extraordinary conduct of Lord Mountpromise, and that I was a candidate for Goldborough at the last election, and that I should have won easy, if my committee had not been bought. I wish to heaven that if you *do* say anything about me, you'd tell the simple truth.

Dragoman—[is silent].

Pasha.—What says the friendly Lord of London? is there aught that I can grant him within the pashalik of Karaghoolookoldour?

Dragoman (growing sulky and literal).—This friendly Englishman—this branch of Mudcombe—this head-purveyor of Goldborough—this possible policeman of Bedfordshire is recounting his achievements, and the number of his titles.

Pasha.—The end of his honors is more distant than the ends of the Earth, and the catalogue of his glorious deeds is brighter than the firmament of Heaven!

Dragoman (to the Traveller).—The Pasha congratulates your Excellency.

Traveller.—About Goldborough? The deuce he does!—but I want to get at his views, in relation to the present state of the Ottoman Empire; tell him the Houses of Parliament have met, and that there has been a Speech from the throne, pledging England to preserve the integrity of the Sultan's dominions.

Dragoman (to the Pasha).—This branch of Mudcombe, this possible policeman of Bedfordshire, informs your Highness that in England the talking houses have met, and that the integrity of the Sultan's dominions has been assured for ever and ever, by a speech from the velvet chair.

Pasha.—Wonderful chair! Wonderful houses!—whirr! whirr! all by wheels!—whiz! whiz! all by steam!—wonderful chair! wonderful houses! wonderful people!—whirr! whirr! all by wheels!—whiz! whiz! all by steam!

Traveller (to the Dragoman).—What does the Pasha mean by the whizzing? he does not mean to say, does he, that our Government will ever abandon their pledges to the Sultan?

Dragoman.—No, your Excellency; but he says the English talk by wheels and by steam.

Traveller.—That's an exaggeration; but say that the English really have carried machinery to great perfection; tell the Pasha (he'll be struck with that), that whenever we have any disturbances to put down, even at two or three hundred miles from London, we can send troops by the thousand, to the scene of action, in a few hours.

Dragoman (recovering his temper and freedom of speech).—His Excellency, this Lord of Mudcombe, observes to your Highness, that whenever the Irish, or the French, or the Indians rebel against the English, whole armies of soldiers, and brigades of artillery, are dropped into a mighty chasm called Euston Square, and in the biting of a cartridge they arise up again in Manchester, or Dublin, or Paris, or Delhi, and utterly exterminate the enemies of England from the face of the earth.

Pasha.—I know it—I know all—the particulars have been faithfully related to me, and my mind comprehends locomotives. The armies of the English ride upon the vapors of boiling cauldrons, and their horses are flaming coals!—whirr! whirr! all by wheels!—whiz! whiz! all by steam!

Traveller (to his Dragoman).—I wish to have the opinion of an unprejudiced Ottoman gentleman, as to the prospects of our English commerce and manufactures; just ask the Pasha to give me his views on the subject.

Pasha (after having received the communication of the Dra-

goman).—The ships of the English swarm like flies; their printed calicoes cover the whole earth, and by the side of their swords the blades of Damascus are blades of grass. All India is but an item in the Ledger-books of the Merchants, whose lumber-rooms are filled with ancient thrones!—whirr! whirr! all by wheels!—whiz! whiz! all by steam!

Dragoman.—The Pasha compliments the cutlery of England, and also the East India Company.

Traveller.—The Pasha's right about the cutlery (I tried my scimitar with the common officers' swords belonging to our fellows at Malta, and they cut it like the leaf of a Novel). Well (to the Dragoman), tell the Pasha I am exceedingly gratified to find that he entertains such a high opinion of our manufacturing energy, but I should like him to know, though, that we have got something in England besides that. These foreigners are always fancying that we have nothing but ships, and railways, and East India Companies; do just tell the Pasha that our rural districts deserve his attention, and that even within the last two hundred years, there has been an evident improvement in the culture of the turnip, and if he does not take any interest about that, at all events you can explain that we have our virtues in the country—that the British yeoman is still, thank God! the British yeoman:—Oh! and by the by, whilst you are about it, you may as well say that we are a truth-telling people, and, like the Osmanlees, are faithful in the performance of our promises.

Pasha (after hearing the Dragoman).—It is true, it is true:—through all Feringhistan the English are foremost and best; for the Russians are drilled swine, and the Germans are sleeping babes, and the Italians are the servants of Songs, and the French are the sons of Newspapers, and the Greeks they are weavers of lies, but the English and the Osmanlees are brothers together in righteousness; for the Osmanlees believe in one only God, and cleave to the Koran, and destroy idols; so do the English worship one God, and abominate graven images, and tell the truth, and believe in a book, and though they drink the juice of the grape, yet to say that they worship their prophet as God, or to say that they are eaters of pork, these are lies,—lies born of Greeks, and nursed by Jews!

Dragoman.—The Pasha compliments the English.

Traveller (rising).—Well, I've had enough of this. Tell the Pasha, I am greatly obliged to him for his hospitality, and still more for his kindness in furnishing me with horses, and say that now I must be off.

Pasha (after hearing the *Dragoman*, and standing up on his Divan).—Proud are the sires, and blessed are the dams of the horses that shall carry his Excellency to the end of his prosperous journey.—May the saddle beneath him glide down to the gates of the happy city, like a boat swimming on the third river of Paradise.—May he sleep the sleep of a child, when his friends are around him, and the while that his enemies are abroad, may his eyes flame red through the darkness—more red than the eyes of ten tigers!—farewell!

Dragoman.—The Pasha wishes your Excellency a pleasant journey.

So ends the visit.

CHAPTER II.

Journey from Belgrade to Constantinople.

IN two or three hours our party was ready ; the servants, the Tatars, the mounted Suridgees, and the baggage-horses altogether made up a strong cavalcade. The accomplished Mysseri, of whom you have heard me speak so often, and who served me so faithfully throughout my oriental journeys, acted as our interpreter, and was, in fact, the brain of our corps. The Tatar, you know, is a government courier properly employed in carrying despatches, but also sent with travellers to speed them on their way, and answer with his head for their safety. The man whose head was thus pledged for our precious lives was a glorious looking fellow, with the regular, and handsome cast of countenance, which is now characteristic of the Ottoman race.* His features displayed a good deal of serene pride, self-respect, fortitude, a kind of ingenuous sensuality, and something of instinctive wisdom, without any sharpness of intellect. He had been a Janissary (as I afterwards found), and kept up the odd strut of his old corps, which used to affright the Christians in former times ;—that rolling gait is so comically pompous, that a close imitation of it, even in the broadest farce, would be looked upon as a very rough over-acting of the character. It is occasioned in part by the dress, and accoutrements. The heavy bundle of weapons carried upon the chest throws back the body so as to give it a wonderful portliness, whilst the immense masses of clothes that swathe his limbs, force the wearer in walking, to swing himself heavily round from left to right, and from right to left—in truth, this great edifice of woollen, and cotton, and silk,

* The continual marriages of these people, with the chosen beauties of Georgia and Circassia, have overpowered the original ugliness of their Tatar ancestors.

and silver, and brass, and steel, is not at all fitted for moving on foot; it cannot even walk without ludicrously deranging its architectural proportions, and as to running, I once saw our Tatar make an attempt at that laborious exercise, in order to pick up a partridge which Methley had winged with a pistol-shot, and really the attempt was one of the funniest misdirections of human energy that I ever beheld. It used to be said, that a good man, struggling with adversity, was a spectacle worthy of the gods:—a Tatar attempting to run would have been a sight worthy of you. But put him in his stirrups, and then is the Tatar himself again: there you see him at his ease, reposing in the tranquillity of that true home (the home of his ancestors), which the saddle seems to afford him, and drawing from his pipe the calm pleasures of his “own fireside,” or else dashing sudden over the earth, as though for a moment he were borne by the steed of a Turkman chief, with the plains of central Asia before him. It was not till his subordinates had nearly completed their preparations for their march that our Tatar, “commanding the forces,” arrived; he came sleek, and fresh from the bath (for so is the custom of the Ottomans when they start upon a journey), and was carefully accoutred at every point. From his thigh to his throat he was loaded with arms and other implements of a campaigning life. There is no scarcity of water along the whole road, from Belgrade to Stamboul, but the habits of our Tatar were formed by his ancestors, and not by himself, so he took good care to see that his leather water-flask was amply charged and properly strapped to the saddle, along with his blessed tchibouque. And now at last, he has cursed the Suridgees, in all proper figures of speech, and is ready for a ride of a thousand miles, but before he comforts his soul in the marble baths of Stamboul, he will be another and a smaller man—his sense of responsibility, his too strict abstemiousness, and his restless energy, disdainful of sleep, will have worn him down to a fraction of the sleek Moostapha, that now leads out our party from the gates of Belgrade.

The Suridgees are the fellows employed to lead the baggage horses. They are most of them Gipsies. Poor devils! their lot is an unhappy one—they are the last of the human race, and all

the sins of their superiors (including the horses) can safely be visited on them. But the wretched look often more picturesque than their betters, and though all the world look down upon these poor Suridgees, their tawny skins, and their grisly beards, will gain them honorable standing in the foreground of a landscape. We had a couple of these fellows with us, each leading a baggage horse, to the tail of which last, another baggage horse was attached. There was a world of trouble in persuading the stiff angular portmanteaus of Europe to adapt themselves to their new condition, and sit quietly on pack-saddles, but all was right at last, and it gladdened my eyes to see our little troop file off through the winding lanes of the city, and show down brightly in the plain beneath; the one of our party that seemed to be most out of keeping with the rest of the scene, was Methley's Yorkshire servant, who rode doggedly on in his pantry jacket, looking out for "gentlemen's seats."

Methley and I had English saddles, but I think we should have done just as well (I should certainly have seen more of the country), if we had adopted saddles like that of our Tatar, who towered so loftily over the scraggy little beast that carried him. In taking thought for the East, whilst in England, I had made one capital hit which you must not forget—I had brought with me a pair of common spurs, which were a great comfort to me throughout my travels by keeping up the cheerfulness of the many unhappy nags which I had to bestride; the angle of the oriental stirrup is a very poor substitute for spurs.

The Ottoman horseman, raised by his saddle to a great height above the humble level of the back which he bestrides, and using an awfully sharp bit, is able to lift the crest of his nag, and force him into a strangely fast amble, which is the orthodox pace for the journey; my comrade and I thought it a bore to be *followed* by our attendants for a thousand miles, and we generally, therefore, did duty as the rear-guard of our "grand army;" we used to walk our horses till the party in front had got into the distance, and then retrieve the lost ground by a gallop.

We had ridden on for some two or three hours—the stir and bustle of our commencing journey had ceased—the liveliness of

our little troop had worn off with the declining day, and the night closed in as we entered the Great Servian forest, through which our road was to last for more than a hundred miles. Endless, and endless now on either side, the tall oaks closed in their ranks, and stood gloomily lowering over us, as grim as an army of giants with a thousand years' pay in arrear. One strived with listening ear to catch some tidings of that Forest World within—some stirring of beasts, some night bird's scream, but all was quite hushed, except the voice of the cicadas that peopled every bough, and filled the depths of the forest through, and through, with one same hum everlasting—more stilling than very silence.

At first our way was in darkness, but after a while the moon got up and touched the glittering arms and tawny faces of our men with light so pale and mystic, that the watchful Tatar felt bound to look out for Demons, and take proper means for keeping them off; he immediately determined that the duty of frightening away our ghostly enemies (like every other troublesome work), should fall upon the poor Suridgees, who accordingly lifted up their voices, and burst upon the dreadful stillness of the forest with shrieks and dismal howls. These precautions were kept up incessantly, and were followed by the most complete success, for not one demon came near us.

Long before midnight, we reached the hamlet in which we were to rest for the night; it was made up of about a dozen clay huts, standing upon a small tract of ground which had been conquered from the forest. The peasants that lived there spoke a Slavonic dialect, and Mysseri's knowledge of the Russian tongue enabled him to talk with them freely. We soon took up our quarters in a square room, with white walls, and an earthen floor, quite bare of furniture and utterly void of women. They told us, however, that these Servian villagers were very well off, but that they were careful to conceal their wealth, as well as their wives.

The burthens unstrapped from the packsaddles very quickly furnished our den; a couple of quilts spread upon the floor, with a carpet bag at the head of each, became capital sofas—portmanteaus, and hat boxes, and writing cases, and books, and

maps, and gleaming arms, were soon strewed around us in pleasant confusion; Mysseri's canteen, too, began to yield up its treasures, but we relied upon finding some provisions in the village. At first the natives declared that their hens were mere old maids, and all their cows unmarried, but our Tatar swore such a grand, sonorous oath, and fingered the hilt of his yataghan with such persuasive touch, that the land soon flowed with milk, and mountains of eggs arose.

And soon there was tea before us, with all its unspeakable fragrance, and as we reclined on the floor, we found that a port-manteau was just the right height for a table; the duty of candlesticks was ably performed by a couple of intelligent natives; the rest of them stood by the open door-way at the lower end of the room, and watched our banqueting with deep and serious attention.

The first night of your first campaign (though you be but a mere peaceful campaigner) is a glorious time in your life. It is so sweet to find oneself free from the stale civilisation of Europe! Oh my dear ally! when first you spread your carpet in the midst of these eastern scenes, do think for a moment of those your fellow creatures, that dwell in squares, and streets, and even (for such is the fate of many!) in actual country houses; think of the people that are "presenting their compliments," and "requesting the honor," and "much regretting,"—of those that are pinioned at dinner tables, or stuck up in ball-rooms, or cruelly planted in pews—ay, think of these, and so remembering how many poor devils are living in a state of utter respectability, you will glory the more in your own delightful escape.

I am bound to confess, however, that with all its charms, a mud floor (like a mercenary match) does certainly promote early rising. Long before daybreak we were up, and had breakfasted; after this there was nearly a whole tedious hour to endure, whilst the horses were laden by torch-light; but this had an end, and at last we went on once more. Cloaked, and sombre, at first we made our sullen way through the darkness, with scarcely one barter of words, but soon the genial morning burst over us, and stirred the blood so gladly through our veins,

that the very Suridgees, with all their troubles, could now look up for an instant, and almost believe in the temporary goodness of God.

The actual movement from one place to another, in Europeanized countries, is a process so temporary—it occupies, I mean, so small a portion of the traveller's entire time, that his mind remains unsettled, so long as the wheels are going; he is alive enough to the external objects of interest, which the route may afford, and to the crowding ideas which are often invited by the excitement of a changing scene, but he is still conscious of being in a provisional state, and his mind is constantly recurring to the expected end of his journey; his ordinary ways of thought have been interrupted, and before any new mental habits can be formed he is quietly fixed in his hotel. It will be otherwise with you when you journey in the East. Day after day, perhaps week after week, and month after month, your foot is in the stirrup. To taste the cold breath of the earliest morn, and to lead or follow your bright cavalcade till sunset through forests, and mountain passes, through valleys, and desolate plains, all this becomes your **MODE OF LIFE**, and you ride, eat, drink, and curse the mosquitoes, as systematically as your friends in England eat, drink, and sleep. If you are wise, you will not look upon the long period of time thus occupied by your journeys as the mere gulfs which divide you from the place to which you are going, but rather as most rare and beautiful portions of your life, from which may come temper and strength. Once feel this, and you will soon grow happy and contented in your saddle home. As for me and my comrade, in this part of our journey we often forgot Stamboul, forgot all the Ottoman Empire, and only remembered old times. We went back, loitering on the banks of Thames—not grim old Thames of “after life” that washes the Parliament House, and drowns despairing girls,—but Thames the “old Eton fellow” that wrestled with us in our boyhood till he taught us to be stronger than he. We bullied Keate, and scoffed at Larrey Miller, and Okes; we rode along loudly laughing, and talked to the grave Servian forest, as though it were the “Brocas clump.” Our pace was commonly very slow, for the baggage

horses served us for a drag, and kept us to a rate of little more than five miles in the hour, but now and then, and chiefly at night, a spirit of movement would suddenly animate the whole party; the baggage horses would be teased into a gallop, and when once this was done, there would be such a banging of portmanteaus, and such convulsions of carpet bags upon their panting sides, and the Suridgees would follow them up with such a hurricane of blows, and screams, and curses, that stopping or relaxing was scarcely possible; then the rest of us would put our horses into a gallop, and so all shouting cheerily, would hunt, and drive the sumpter beasts like a flock of goats, up hill and down dale, right on to the end of their journey.

The distances at which we got relays of horses varied greatly; some were not more than fifteen or twenty miles, but twice, I think, we performed a whole day's journey of more than sixty miles with the same beasts.

When, at last, we came out from the forest, our road lay through scenes like those of an English park. The green sward unfenced, and left to the free pasture of cattle, was dotted with groups of stately trees, and here and there darkened over with larger masses of wood, that seemed gathered together for bounding the domain, and shutting out some infernal fellow-creature in the shape of a new-made squire: in one or two spots the hanging corses looked down upon a lawn below with such sheltering mien, that seeing the like in England, you would have been tempted almost to ask the name of the spendthrift, or the madman who had dared to pull down the old hall.

There are few countries less infested by "lions" than the provinces on this part of your route; you are not called upon "to drop a tear" over the tomb of "the once brilliant" anybody, or to pay your "tribute of respect" to anything dead, or alive; there are no Servian, or Bulgarian Litterateurs with whom it would be positively disgraceful not to form an acquaintance; you have no staring, no praising to get through; the only public building of any interest which lies on the road is of modern date, but is said to be a good specimen of oriental architecture; it is of a pyramidical shape, and is made up of thirty thousand skulls which were contributed by the rebellious

Servians in the early part (I believe) of this century ; I am not at all sure of my date, but I fancy it was in the year 1806 that the first skull was laid. I am ashamed to say, that in the darkness of the early morning, we unknowingly went by the neighborhood of this triumph of art, and so basely got off from admiring "the simple grandeur of the architect's conception," and "the exquisite beauty of the fretwork."

There being no "lions," we ought at least to have met with a few perils, but there were no women to attack our peace (they were all wrapt up, or locked in), and as for robbers, the only robbers we saw anything of had been long since dead and gone ; the poor fellows had been impaled upon high poles, and so propped up by the transverse spokes beneath them, that their skeletons, clothed with some white, wax-like remains of flesh, still sat up lolling in the sunshine, and listlessly stared without eyes.

One day it seemed to me that our path was a little more rugged, and less level than usual, and I found that I was deserving for myself the title of Sabalkansky, or "Transcender of the Balcan." The truth is, that, as a military barrier, the Balcan is a fabulous mountain ; such seems to be the view of Major Keppell, who looked on it towards the East with the eye of a soldier, and certainly in the Sophia pass, which I followed, there is no narrow defile, and no ascent sufficiently difficult to stop, or delay for long time, a train of siege artillery.

Before we reached Adrianople, Methley had been seized with we knew not what ailment, and when we had taken up our quarters in the city, he was cast to the very earth by sickness. Adrianople enjoyed an English Consul, and I felt sure that, in Eastern phrase, his house would cease to be his house, and would become the house of my sick comrade ; I should have judged rightly under ordinary circumstances, but the levelling plague was abroad, and the dread of it had dominion over the consular mind. So now (whether dying or not, one could hardly tell), upon a quilt stretched out along the floor, there lay the best hope of an ancient line, without the material aids to comfort of even the humblest sort, and (sad to say) without the consolation of a friend, or even a comrade worth having. I

have a notion that tenderness and pity are affections occasioned in some measure by living within doors ; certainly, at the time I speak of, the open air life which I had been leading, or the wayfaring hardships of the journey had so strangely blunted me, that I felt intolerant of illness, and looked down upon my companion as if the poor fellow in falling ill had betrayed a decided want of spirit ! I entertained, too, a most absurd idea—an idea that his illness was partly affected. You see that I have made a confession : this I hope—that I may always hereafter look charitably upon the hard, savage acts of peasants, and the cruelties of a “brutal” soldiery. God knows that I strived to melt myself into common charity, and to put on a gentleness which I could not feel, but this attempt did not cheat the keenness of the sufferer ; he could not have felt the less deserted, because that I was with him.

We called to aid a solemn Armenian (I think he was), half soothsayer, half hakim, or doctor, who, all the while counting his beads, fixed his eyes steadily upon the patient, and then suddenly dealt him a violent blow in the chest. Methley bravely dissembled his pain, for he fancied that the blow was meant to try whether or not the plague were on him.

Here was really a sad embarrassment—no bed—nothing to offer the invalid in the shape of food, save a piece of thin, tough, flexible, drab-colored cloth, made of flour and mill-stones in equal proportions, and called by the name of “bread ;” then the patient, of course, had no “confidence in his medical man,” and on the whole, the best chance of saving my comrade seemed to be by taking him out of the reach of his doctor, and bearing him away to the neighborhood of some more genial consul. But how was this to be done ? Methley was much too ill to be kept in the saddle, and wheel-carriages, as means of travelling, were unknown. There is, however, such a thing as an “Araba,” a vehicle drawn by oxen, in which the wives of a rich man are sometimes dragged four or five miles over the grass by way of recreation. The carriage is rudely framed, but you recognize in the simple grandeur of its design a likeness to things majestic ; in short, if your carpenter’s son were to make a ‘Lord Mayor’s coach’ for little Amy, he would build a carriage

very much in the style of a Turkish Araba. No one had ever heard of horses being used for drawing a carriage in this part of the world, but Necessity is the mother of Innovation, as well as of Invention. I was fully justified, I think, in arguing that there were numerous instances of horses being used for that purpose in our own country—that the laws of nature are uniform in their operation over all the world (except Ireland)—that that which was true in Piccadilly, must be true in Adrianople—that the matter could not fairly be treated as an ecclesiastical question, for that the circumstance of Methley's going on to Stamboul in an Araba drawn by horses, when calmly and dispassionately considered, would appear to be perfectly consistent with the maintenance of the Mahometan religion, as by law established. Thus poor, dear, patient Reason would have fought her slow battle against Asiatic prejudice, and I am convinced that she would have established the possibility (and perhaps, even the propriety) of harnessing horses in a hundred and fifty years; but in the meantime Mysseri, well seconded by our Tatar, put a very quick end to the controversy, by having the horses put to.

It was a sore thing for me to see my poor comrade brought to this, for young though he was, he was a veteran in travel; when scarcely yet of age, he had invaded India from the frontiers of Russia, and that so swiftly, that measuring by the time of his flight, the broad dominions of the King of Kings were shrivelled up to a Dukedom, and now poor fellow, he was to be poked into an Araba, like a Georgian girl! He suffered greatly, for there were no springs for the carriage, and no road for the wheels, and so the concern jolted on over the open country, with such twists, and jerks, and jumps, as might almost dislocate the supple tongue of Satan.

All day the patient kept himself shut up within the lattice-work of the Araba, and I could hardly know how he was faring until the end of the day's journey, when I found that he was not worse, and was buoyed up with the hope of some day reaching Constantinople.

I was always conning over my maps, and fancied that I knew pretty well my line, but after Adrianople I had made more

southing than I knew for, and it was with unbelieving wonder, and delight, that I came suddenly upon the shore of the sea; a little while, and its gentle billows were flowing beneath the hoofs of my beast, but the hearing of the ripple was not enough communion,—and the seeing of the blue Propontis was not to know and possess it—I must needs plunge into its depths, and quench my longing love in the palpable waves; and so when old Moostapha (defender against demons) looked round for his charge, he saw with horror and dismay, that he for whose life his own life stood pledged, was possessed of some devil who had driven him down into the sea—that the rider and the steed had vanished from earth, and that out among the waves was the gasping crest of a post horse, and the pale head of the Englishman moving upon the face of the waters.

We started very early indeed, on the last day of our journey, and from the moment of being off, until we gained the shelter of the imperial walls, we were struggling face to face with an icy storm that swept right down from the steppes of Tartary, keen, fierce, and steady as a northern conqueror. Methley's servant, who was the greatest sufferer, kept his saddle until we reached Stamboul, but was then found to be quite benumbed in limbs, and his brain was so much affected, that when he was lifted from his horse, he fell away in a state of unconsciousness, the first stage of a dangerous fever.

Methley, in his Araba, had been sheltered from the storm, but he was sadly ill. I myself bore up capitally for a delicate person, but I was so well watered, and the blood of my veins had shrunk away so utterly from the chilling touch of the blast, that I must have looked more fit for a watery grave, than for the city of the Prince, whom men call "Brother of the Sun."

Our Tatar, worn down by care and toil, and carrying seven heavens full of water, in his manifold jackets and shawls, was a mere weak and vapid dilution of the sleek Moostapha, who scarce more than one fortnight before came out like a bridegroom from his chamber, to take the command of our party.

Mysseri seemed somewhat over-wearied, but he had lost none of his strangely quiet energy; he wore a grave look, however, for he now had learnt that the plague was prevailing at Constan-

tinople, and he was fearing that our two sick men, and the miserable looks of our whole party, might make us unwelcome at Pera.

Our poor, dear portmanteaus, whose sharp, angular forms had rebelled so rudely against the pack-saddles, were now reduced to soft, pulpy substances, and the things which were in them could plainly be of no immediate use to anybody but a merman, or a river-god; the carpet bags seemed to contain nothing but mere solutions of coats and boots, escaping drop by drop.

We crossed the Golden Horn in a caïque; as soon as we had landed, some wo-begone looking fellows were got together, and laden with our baggage. Then, on we went, dripping, and sloshing, and looking very like men that had been turned back by the Royal Humane Society, as being incurably drowned. Supporting our sick, we climbed up shelving steps, and threaded many windings, and at last came up into the main street of Pera, humbly hoping that we might not be judged guilty of plague, and so be cast back with horror from the doors of the shuddering Christians.

Such was the condition of our party, which fifteen days before had filed away so gaily from the gates of Belgrade. A couple of fevers, and a north-easterly storm, had thoroughly spoiled our looks.

The interest of Mysseri with the house of Giuseppeni was too powerful to be denied, and at once, though not without fear and trembling, we were admitted as guests.

CHAPTER III.

Constantinople.

EVEN if we don't take a part in the chaunt about "Mosques and Minarets," we can still yield praises to Stamboul. We can chaunt about the harbor; we can say and sing, that nowhere else does the sea come so home to a city; there are no pebbly shores—no sand bars—no slimy river-beds—no black canals—no locks nor docks to divide the very heart of the place from the deep waters; if, being in the noisiest mart of Stamboul, you would stroll to the quiet side of the way amidst those Cypresses opposite, you will cross the fathomless Bosphorus; if you would go from your hotel to the Bazaars, you must go by the bright, blue pathway of the Golden Horn, that can carry a thousand sail of the line. You are accustomed to the Gondolas that glide among the palaces of St. Mark, but here at Stamboul it is a hundred and twenty gun ship that meets you in the street. Venice strains out from the steadfast land, and in old times would send forth the Chief of the State to woo, and wed the reluctant sea; but the stormy bride of the Doge is the bowing slave of the Sultan—she comes to his feet with the treasures of the world—she bears him from palace to palace—by some unfailing witchcraft, she entices the breezes to follow her,* and fan the pale cheek of her lord—she lifts his armed navies to the very gates of his garden—she watches the walls of his Serail—she stifles the intrigues of his Ministers—she quiets the scandals of his Court—she extinguishes his rivals, and hushes his naughty wives all one by one. So vast are the wonders of the Deep!

All the while that I stayed at Constantinople, the Plague was prevailing, but not with any degree of violence; its presence,

* There is almost always a breeze, either from the Marmora, or from the Black Sea, that passes along through the Bosphorus.

however, lent a mysterious, and exciting, though not very pleasant interest to my first knowledge of a great Oriental city ; it gave tone and color to all I saw, and all I felt—a tone, and a color sombre enough, but true, and well befitting the dreary monuments of past power and splendor. With all that is most truly oriental in its character, the Plague is associated ; it dwells with the faithful in the holiest quarters of their city : the coats and the hats of Pera are held to be nearly as innocent of infection, as they are ugly in shape and fashion ; but the rich furs, and the costly shawls, the brodered slippers, and the gold-laden saddle-cloths—the fragrance of burning aloes, and the rich aroma of patchouli—these are the signs which mark the familiar home of Plague. You go out from your living London—the centre of the greatest and strongest among all earthly dominions—you go out thence, and travel on to the capital of an Eastern Prince—you find but a waning power, and a faded splendor, that inclines you to laugh and mock ; but let the infernal Angel of Plague be at hand, and he, more mighty than armies—more terrible than Suleyman in his glory, can restore such pomp and majesty to the weakness of the Imperial walls, that if, *when HE is there*, you must still go prying amongst the shades of this dead Empire, at least you will tread the path with seemly reverence and awe.

It is the firm faith of almost all the Europeans living in the East, that Plague is conveyed by the touch of infected substances, and that the deadly atoms especially lurk in all kinds of clothes and furs ; it is held safer to breathe the same air with a man sick of the Plague, and even to come in contact with his skin, than to be touched by the smallest particle of woollen, or of thread, which may have been within the reach of possible infection. If this notion be correct, the spread of the malady must be materially aided by the observance of a custom which prevails amongst the people of Stamboul ; when an Osmanlee dies, it is usual to cut up one of his dresses, and to send a small piece of it to each of his friends, as a memorial of the departed. A fatal present is this, according to the opinion of the Franks, for it too often forces the living not merely to remember the dead man, but to follow and bear him company.

The Europeans during the prevalence of the Plague, if they are forced to venture into the streets, will carefully avoid the touch of every human being whom they pass; their conduct in this respect shows them strongly in contrast with the "true believers;" the Moslem stalks on serenely, as though he were under the eye of his God, and were "equal to either fate;" the Franks go crouching, and slinking from death, and some (those chiefly of French extraction) will fondly strive to fence out Destiny with shining capes of oilskin!

For some time you may manage by great care to thread your way through the streets of Stamboul, without incurring contact, for the Turks, though scornful of the terrors felt by the Franks, are generally very courteous in yielding to that which they hold to be a useless and impious precaution, and will let you pass safe, if they can. It is impossible, however, that your immunity can last for any length of time, if you move about much through the narrow streets and lanes of a crowded city.

As for me, I soon got "compromised." After one day of rest, the prayers of my hostess began to lose their power of keeping me from the pestilent side of the Golden Horn. Faithfully promising to shun the touch of all imaginable substances, however enticing, I set off very cautiously, and held my way uncompromised, till I reached the water's edge: but during the moment that I was waiting for my caïque, some rueful-looking fellows came rapidly shambling down the steps with a plague-stricken corpse, which they were going to bury amongst the faithful on the other side of the water. I contrived to be so much in the way of this brisk funeral, that I was not only touched by the men bearing the body, but also, I believe, by the foot of the dead man, which was lolling out of the bier. This accident gave me such a strong interest in denying the soundness of the contagion theory, that I did in fact deny, and repudiate it altogether; and from that time, acting upon my own convenient view of the matter, I went wherever I chose, without taking any serious pains to avoid a touch. I have now some reason to think that the Europeans may be right, and that the Plague may be really conveyed by contagion; but whilst I remained in the East, I happily entertained ideas more ap-

proaching to those of the fatalist ; and so, when I afterwards encountered the Plague in full force, I was able to live amongst the dying with much less anxiety of mind, than I should have suffered, if I had believed that every touch which I met with, was a possible death-stroke.

And perhaps as you make your difficult way through a steep and narrow alley, which winds between blank walls, and is little frequented by passers, you meet one of those coffin-shaped bundles of white linen which implies an Ottoman lady. Painfully struggling against the obstacles to progression which are interposed by the many folds of her clumsy drapery, by her big mud boots, and especially by her two pairs of slippers, she waddles along full awkwardly enough, but yet there is something of womanly consciousness in the very labor and effort with which she tugs and lifts the burthen of her charms ; she is close followed by her women slaves. Of her very self you see nothing, except the dark, luminous eyes that stare against your face, and the tips of the painted fingers depending like rose-buds from out the blank bastions of the fortress. She turns, and turns again, and carefully glances around her on all sides, to see that she is safe from the eyes of Mussulmans, and then suddenly withdrawing the yashmak,* she shines upon your heart and soul with all the pomp and might of her beauty. And this which so dizzies your brain is not the light, changeful grace, which leaves you to doubt whether you have fallen in love with a body, or only a soul ; it is the beauty that dwells secure in the perfectness of hard, downright outlines, and in the glow of generous color. There is fire, though, too—high courage, and fire enough in the untamed mind, or spirit, or whatever it is, which drives the breath of pride through those scarcely parted lips.

You smile at pretty women—you turn pale before the beauty that is great enough to have dominion over you. She sees, and exults in your giddiness ; she sees and smiles ; then presently,

* The Yashmak, you know, is not a mere semi-transparent veil, but rather a good substantial petticoat applied to the face ; it thoroughly conceals all the features, except the eyes ; the way of withdrawing it is by pulling it down.

with a sudden movement, she lays her blushing fingers upon your arm, and cries out, "Yumourdjak !" (Plague ! meaning "there is a present of the Plague for you !") This is her notion of a witticism : it is a very old piece of fun, no doubt—quite an oriental Joe Miller ; but the Turks are fondly attached, not only to the institutions, but also to the jokes of their ancestors ; so, the lady's silvery laugh rings joyously in your ears, and the mirth of her women is boisterous and fresh, as though the bright idea of giving the Plague to a Christian had newly lit upon the earth.

Methley began to rally very soon after we had reached Constantinople, but there seemed at first to be no chance of his regaining strength enough for travelling during the winter ; and I determined to stay with my comrade, until he had quite recovered ; so I got a horse, and a pipe of tranquillity, and took a Turkish phrase-master. I troubled myself a great deal with the Turkish tongue, and gained at last some knowledge of its structure ; it is enriched, perhaps overladen, with Persian and Arabic words, which have been imported into the language, chiefly for the purpose of representing sentiments and religious dogmas, and terms of art and luxury, which were all unknown to the Tartar ancestors of the present Osmanlees ; but the body and spirit of the old tongue is yet alive, and the smooth words of the shop-keeper at Constantinople can still carry understanding to the ears of the untamed millions who rove over the plains of Northern Asia. The structure of the language, especially in its more lengthy sentences, is very like to the Latin ; the subject matters are slowly and patiently enumerated, without disclosing the purpose of the speaker until he reaches the end of his sentence, and then at last there comes the clenching word, which gives a meaning and connexion to all that has gone before. If you listen at all to speaking of this kind, your attention, rather than be suffered to flag, must grow more and more lively, as the phrase marches on.

The Osmanlees speak well. In countries civilized according to the European plan, the work of trying to persuade tribunals is almost all performed by a set of men, the great body of whom very seldom do anything else ; but in Turkey, this division of

labor has never taken place, and every man is his own advocate. The importance of the rhetorical art is immense, for a bad speech may endanger the property of the speaker, as well as the soles of his feet, and the free enjoyment of his throat. So it results that most of the Turks whom one sees, have a lawyer-like habit of speaking connectedly, and at length. The treaties continually going on in the bazaar for the buying and selling of the merest trifles, are carried on by speechifying, rather than by mere colloquies, and the eternal uncertainty as to the market value of things in constant sale, gives room for endless discussion. The seller is for ever demanding a price immensely beyond that for which he sells at last, and so occasions unspeakable disgust to many Englishmen, who cannot see why an honest dealer should ask more for his goods than he will really take:—the truth is, however, that an ordinary tradesman of Constantinople has no other way of finding out the fair market value of his property. The difficulty under which he labors is easily shown by comparing the mechanism of the commercial system in Turkey, with that of our own country. In England, or in any other great mercantile country, the bulk of the things which are bought and sold, goes through the hands of a wholesale dealer, and it is he who higgles and bargains with an entire nation of purchasers, by entering into treaty with retail sellers. The labor of making a few large contracts is sufficient to give a clue for finding the fair market value of the things sold throughout the country; but in Turkey, from the primitive habits of the people, and partly from the absence of great capital, and great credit, the importing merchant, the warehouseman, the wholesale dealer, and the shopman, are all one person. Old Moostapha, or Abdallah, or Hadgi Mohamed, waddles up from the water's edge with a small packet of merchandize, which he has bought out of a Greek brigantine, and when at last he has reached his nook in the bazaar, he puts his goods *before* the counter, and himself *upon* it—then laying fire to his tchibouque he “sits in permanence,” and patiently waits to obtain “the best price that can be got in an open market.” This is his fair right as a seller, but he has no means of finding out what that best price is, except by actual experiment. He cannot know the intensity of

the demand, or the abundance of the supply, otherwise than by the offers which may be made for his little bundle of goods; so he begins by asking a perfectly hopeless price, and thence descends the ladder until he meets a purchaser, for ever

“striving to attain
By shadowing out the unattainable.”

This is the struggle which creates the continual occasion for debate. The vendor, perceiving that the unfolded merchandize has caught the eye of a possible purchaser, commences his opening speech. He covers his bristling broadcloths, and his meagre silks, with the golden broidery of oriental praises, and as he talks, along with the slow and graceful waving of his arms, he lifts his undulating periods, upholds, and poises them well, till they have gathered their weight, and their strength, and then hurls them bodily forward, with grave, momentous swing. The possible purchaser listens to the whole speech with deep and serious attention; but when it is over, *his* turn arrives; he elaborately endeavors to show why he ought not to buy the things at a price twenty times more than their value: bystanders, attracted to the debate, take a part in it as independent members—the vendor is heard in reply, and coming down with his price, furnishes the materials for a new debate. Sometimes, however, the dealer, if he is a very pious Mussulman, and sufficiently rich to hold back his ware, will take a more dignified part, maintaining a kind of judicial gravity, and receiving the applicants who come to his stall, as if they were rather suitors, than customers. He will quietly hear to the end, some long speech which concludes with an offer, and will answer it all with the one monosyllable “Yok,” which means distinctly “No.”

I caught one glimpse of the old Heathen World. My habits of studying military subjects had been hardening my heart against Poetry. For ever staring at the flames of battle, I had blinded myself to the lesser and finer lights that are shed from the imaginations of men. In my reading at this time, I delighted to follow from out of Arabian sands, the feet of the armed believers,

and to stand in the broad, manifest storm-track of Tartar devastation; and thus, though surrounded at Constantinople, by scenes of much interest to the "classical scholar," I had cast aside their associations like an old Greek grammar, and turned my face to the "shining Orient," forgetful of old Greece, and all the pure wealth she has left to this matter-of-fact-ridden world. But it happened to me one day to mount the high grounds overhanging the streets of Pera; I sated my eyes with the pomps of the city, and its crowded waters, and then I looked over where Scutari lay half veiled in her mournful cypresses; I looked yet farther, and higher, and saw in the heavens a silvery cloud that stood fast, and still against the breeze; it was pure, and dazzling white as might be the veil of Cytherea, yet touched with fire, as though from beneath, the loving eyes of an immortal were shining through and through. I knew the bearing, but had enormously misjudged its distance, and underrated its height, and so it was a sign and a testimony—almost as a call from the neglected gods, that now I saw and acknowledged the snowy crown of the Mysian Olympus!

CHAPTER IV.

The Troad.

METHLEY recovered almost suddenly, and we determined to go through the Troad together.

My comrade was a capital Grecian ; it is true that his singular mind so ordered and disposed the classic lore which he had gained, as to impress it with something of an original and barbarous character—with an almost Gothic quaintness, more properly belonging to a rich native ballad, than to the poetry of Hellas ; there was a certain impropriety in his knowing so much Greek—an unfitness in the idea of marble fauns, and satyrs, and even Olympian Gods, lugged in under the oaken roof, and the painted light of an odd old Norman hall. But Methley abounding in Homer, really loved him (as I believe) in all truth, without whim or fancy ; moreover, he had a good deal of the practical sagacity, or sharpness, or whatever you call it

“ of a Yorkshireman hippodamoio,”

and this enabled him to apply his knowledge with much more tact than is usually shown by people so learned as he.

I, too, loved Homer, but not with a scholar's love. The most humble and pious amongst women was yet so proud a mother that she could teach her first-born son, no Watts' hymns—no collects for the day ; she could teach him in earliest childhood, no less than this—to find a home in his saddle, and to love old Homer, and all that Homer sung. True it is, that the Greek was ingeniously rendered into English—the English of Pope even, but it is not such a mesh as that, that can screen an earnest child from the fire of Homer's battles.

I pored over the Odyssey as over a story-book, hoping and fearing for the hero whom yet I partly scorned. But the Iliad—

line by line, I clasped it to my brain with reverence as well as with love. As an old woman deeply trustful sits reading her Bible because of the world to come, so, as though it would fit me for the coming strife of this temporal world, I read, and read the Iliad. Even outwardly it was not like other books; it was throned in towering folios. There was a preface or dissertation printed in type still more majestic than the rest of the book; this I read, but not till my enthusiasm for the Iliad had already run high. The writer, compiling the opinions of many men, and chiefly of the ancients, set forth, I know not how quaintly, that the Iliad was all in all to the human race—that it was history—poetry—revelation—that the works of men's hands were folly and vanity, and would pass away like the dreams of a child, but that the kingdom of Homer would endure for ever and ever.

I assented with all my soul. I read, and still read; I came to know Homer. A learned commentator knows something of the Greeks, in the same sense as an oil-and-color-man may be said to know something of painting, but take an untamed child, and leave him alone for twelve months with any translation of Homer, and he will be nearer by twenty centuries to the spirit of old Greece; *he* does not stop in the ninth year of the siege, to admire this or that group of words—*he* has no books in his tent, but he shares in vital counsels with the "King of men," and knows the inmost souls of the impending Gods; how profanely he exults over the powers divine, when they are taught to dread the prowess of mortals! and most of all how he rejoices when the God of War flies howling from the spear of Diomed, and mounts into Heaven for safety! Then the beautiful episode of the 6th Book: the way to feel this is not to go casting about, and learning from pastors, and masters, how best to admire it; the impatient child is not grubbing for beauties, but pushing the siege; the women vex him with their delays, and their talking—the mention of the nurse is personal, and little sympathy has he for the child that is young enough to be frightened at the nodding plume of a helmet, but all the while that he thus chafes at the pausing of the action, the strong vertical light of Homer's Poetry is blazing so full upon the people, and things of the Iliad, that soon to the eyes of the child, they grow familiar as his

mother's shawl ; yet of this great gain he is unconscious, and on he goes, vengefully thirsting for the best blood of Troy, and never remitting his fierceness, till almost suddenly it is changed for sorrow—the new and generous sorrow that he learns to feel, when the noblest of all his foes lies sadly dying at the Scæan gate.

Heroic days were these, but the dark ages of school-boy life came closing over them. I suppose it's all right in the end, yet, by Jove, at first sight, it does seem a sad intellectual fall from your mother's dressing-room to a buzzing school. You feel so keenly the delights of early knowledge ; you form strange mystic friendships with the mere names of mountains, and seas, and continents, and mighty rivers ; you learn the ways of the planets, and transcend their narrow limits, and ask for the end of space ; you vex the electric cylinder till it yields you, for your toy to play with, that subtle fire in which our earth was forged ; you know of the nations that have towered high in the world, and the lives of the men who have saved whole Empires from oblivion. What more will you ever learn ? Yet the dismal change is ordained, and then, thin, meagre Latin (the same for everybody), with small shreds and patches of Greek, is thrown like a pauper's pall over all your early lore ; instead of sweet knowledge, vile, monkish, doggerel grammars, and graduses, Dictionaries, and Lexicons, and horrible odds and ends of dead languages are given you for your portion, and down you fall, from Roman story to a three inch scrap of "*Scriptores Romani*,"—from Greek poetry, down, down to the cold rations of "*Poetæ Græci*," cut up by commentators, and served out by schoolmasters !

It was not the recollection of school, nor college learning, but the rapturous and earnest reading of my childhood which made me bend forward so longingly to the plains of Troy.

Away from our people and our horses, Methley and I went loitering along, by the willowy banks of a stream that crept in quietness through the low, even plain. There was no stir of weather over-head—no sound of rural labor—no sign of life in the land, but all the earth was dead, and still, as though it had

lain for thrice a thousand years under the leaden gloom of one unbroken sabbath.

Softly and sadly the poor, dumb, patient stream went winding, and winding along through its shifting pathway ; in some places its waters were parted, and then again, lower down, they would meet once more. I could see the stream from year to year was finding itself new channels, and flowed no longer in its ancient track, but I knew that the springs which fed it were high on Ida—the springs of Simois and Scamander !

It was coldly, and thanklessly, and with vacant unsatisfied eyes that I watched the slow coming, and the gliding away of the waters ; I tell myself now, as a profane fact, that I did indeed stand by that river (Methley gathered some seeds from the bushes that grew there), but, since that I am away from his banks, “divine Scamander” has recovered the proper mystery belonging to him, as an unseen deity ; a kind of indistinctness, like that which belongs to far antiquity, has spread itself over my memory, of the winding stream that I saw with these very eyes. One’s mind regains in absence that dominion over earthly things which has been shaken by their rude contact ; you force yourself hardily into the material presence of a mountain, or a river, whose name belongs to poetry and ancient religion, rather than to the external world ; your feelings wound up and kept ready for some sort of half-expected rapture are chilled, and borne down for the time under all this load of real earth and water ; but, let these once pass out of sight, and then again the old fanciful notions are restored, and the mere realities which you have just been looking at are thrown back so far into distance, that the very event of your intrusion upon such scenes begins to look dim, and uncertain as though it belonged to mythology.

It is not over the plain before Troy that the river now flows ; its waters have edged away far towards the north, since the day that “divine Scamander” (whom the gods call Xanthus) went down to do battle for Ilion, with Mars, and Phœbus, and Latona, and Diana glorying in her arrows, and Venus the lover of smiles.

And now, when I was vexed at the migration of Scamander, and the total loss or absorption of poor dear Simois, how happily

Methley reminded me that Homer himself had warned us of some such changes! The Greeks, in beginning their wall, had neglected the hecatombs due to the gods; and so, after the fall of Troy, Apollo turned the paths of the rivers that flow from Ida, and sent them flooding over the wall till all the beach was smooth, and free from the unhallowed works of the Greeks. It is true, I see now, on looking to the passage, that Neptune, when the work of destruction was done, turned back the rivers to their ancient ways:

. . . ποταμούς δ' ἔτρεψε νεεσθαι
Kar' ῥοον ἡπερ προσθεν ἰεν καλλιῤῥοον ἰδωρ,

but their old channels passing through that light pervious soil would have been lost in the nine days' flood, and perhaps the god, when he willed to bring back the rivers to their ancient beds, may have done his work but ill; it is easier, they say, to destroy than it is to restore.

We took to our horses again, and went southward towards the very plain between Troy and the tents of the Greeks, but we rode by a line at some distance from the shore. Whether it was that the lay of the ground hindered my view towards the sea, or that I was all intent upon Ida, or whether my mind was in vacancy, or whether, as is most like, I had strayed from the Dardan plains, all back to gentle England, there is now no knowing, nor caring, but it was—not quite suddenly indeed, but rather as it were, in the swelling and falling of a single wave, that the reality of that very sea-view, which had bounded the sight of the Greeks, now visibly acceded to me, and rolled full in upon my brain. Conceive how deeply that eternal coast-line—that fixed horizon—those island rocks must have graven their images upon the minds of the Grecian warriors by the time that they had reached the ninth year of the siege! conceive the strength, and the fanciful beauty, of the speeches with which a whole army of imagining men must have told their weariness, and how the sauntering chiefs must have welmed that daily, daily scene with their deep Ionian curses!

And now it was that my eyes were greeted with a delightful surprise. Whilst we were at Constantinople, Methley and I had pored over the map together; we agreed that whatever may

have been the exact site of Troy, the Grecian camp must have been nearly opposite to the space betwixt the islands of Imbros and Tenedos :—

Μεσσηγυς Τενεδοιο και Ιμβρου παιπαλοεσσης :

but Methley reminded me of a passage in the Iliad in which Jove is represented as looking at the scene of action before Ilion from above the Island of Samothrace. Now, Samothrace, according to the map, appeared to be not only out of all seeing distance from the Troad, but to be entirely shut out from it by the intervening Imbros, which is a larger island, stretching its length right athwart the line of sight from Samothrace to Troy. Piously allowing that the eagle-eye of Jove might have seen the strife even from his own Olympus, I still felt that if a station were to be chosen from which to see the fight, old Homer, so material in his ways of thought, so averse from all haziness and over-reaching, would have *meant* to give the Thunderer a station within the reach of men's eyes from the plains of Troy. I think that this testing of the poet's words by map and compass, may have shaken a little of my faith in the completeness of his knowledge. Well, now I had come ; there to the south was Tenedos, and here at my side was Imbros, all right, and according to the map, but aloft over Imbros—aloft in a far-away Heaven was Samothrace, the watch-tower of Jove !

So Homer had appointed it, and so it was ; the map was correct enough, but could not, like Homer, convey *the whole truth*. Thus vain and false are the mere human surmises and doubts which clash with Homeric writ !

Nobody, whose mind had not been reduced to the most deplorably logical condition, could look upon this beautiful congruity betwixt the Iliad and the material world, and yet bear to suppose that the poet may have learned the features of the coast from mere hearsay ; now then, I believed—now I knew that Homer had *passed along here*—that this vision of Samothrace over-towering the nearer island was common to him and to me.

After a journey of some few days by the route of Adramiti and Pergamo, we reached Smyrna. The letters which Methley here received obliged him to return to England.

CHAPTER V.

Infidel Smyrna.

SMYRNA, or Giaour Izmir, as the Mussulmans call it, is the main point of commercial contact betwixt Europe and Asia; you are there surrounded by the people, and the confused customs of many, and various nations—you see the fussy European adopting the East, and calming his restlessness with the long Turkish pipe of tranquillity—you see Jews offering services, and receiving blows*—on one side you have a fellow whose dress and beard would give you a good idea of the true oriental, if it were not for the gobe-mouche expression of countenance with which he is swallowing an article in the *National*, and there, just by, is a genuine Osmanlee, smoking away with all the majesty of a Sultan, but before you have time to admire sufficiently his tranquil dignity, and his soft Asiatic repose, the poor old fellow is ruthlessly “run down” by an English midshipman, who has set sail on a Smyrna hack. Such are the incongruities of the “infidel city,” at ordinary times; but when I was there, our friend Carrigaholt had imported himself, and his oddities, as an accession to the other and inferior wonders

* The Jews of Smyrna are poor, and having little merchandize of their own to dispose of, they are sadly importunate in offering their services as intermediaries; their troublesome conduct has led to the custom of beating them in the open streets. It is usual for Europeans to carry long sticks with them for the express purpose of keeping off the chosen people. I always felt ashamed to strike the poor fellows myself, but I confess to the amusement with which I witnessed the observance of this custom by other people; the Jew seldom got hurt much, for he was always expecting the blow, and was ready to recede from it the moment it came; one could not help being rather gratified at seeing him bound away so nimbly with his long robes floating out in the air, and then again wheel round, and return with fresh importunities.

of Smyrna. I was sitting alone in my room one day at Constantinople, when I heard Methley approaching my door with shouts of laughter and welcome, and presently I recognized that peculiar cry by which our friend Carrigaholt expresses his emotions; he soon explained to us the final causes by which the fates had worked out their wonderful purpose of bringing him to Constantinople. He was always, you know, very fond of sailing, but he had got into such sad scrapes (including I think a lawsuit) on account of his last yacht, that he took it into his head to have a cruise in a merchant vessel, so he went to Liverpool, and looked through the craft lying ready to sail, till he found a smart schooner which perfectly suited his taste: the destination of the vessel was the last thing he thought of, and when he was told that she was bound for Constantinople, he merely assented to that as a part of the arrangement to which he had no objection. When the vessel had sailed, the hapless passenger discovered that his skipper carried on board an enormous wife with an inquiring mind, and an irresistible tendency to impart her opinions. She looked upon her guest as upon a piece of waste intellect that ought to be carefully tilled. She tilled him accordingly. If the Dons at Oxford could have seen poor Carrigaholt thus absolutely "attending lectures" in the bay of Biscay, they would surely have thought him sufficiently punished for all the wrongs he did them, whilst he was preparing himself under their care for the other, and more boisterous University. The voyage did not last more than six or eight weeks, and the philosophy inflicted on Carrigaholt was not entirely fatal to him; certainly he was somewhat emaciated, and for aught I know, he may have subscribed somewhat too largely to the "Feminine-right-of-reason Society;" but it did not appear that his health had been seriously affected. There was a scheme on foot, it would seem, for taking the passenger back to England in the same schooner—a scheme, in fact, for keeping him perpetually afloat, and perpetually saturated with arguments; but when Carrigaholt found himself ashore, and remembered that the skipperina (who had imprudently remained on board), was not there to enforce her suggestions, he was open to the hints of his servant (a very sharp fellow), who arranged

a plan for escaping, and finally brought off his master to Giuseppini's Hotel.

Our friend afterwards went by sea to Smyrna, and there he now was in his glory. He had a good, or at all events a gentleman-like judgment in matters of taste, and as his great object was to surround himself with all that his fancy could dictate, he lived in a state of perpetual negotiation; he was for ever on the point of purchasing, not only the material productions of the place, but all sorts of such fine ware as "intelligence," "fidelity," and so on. He was most curious, however, as a purchaser of the "affections." Sometimes he would imagine that he had a marital aptitude, and his fancy would sketch a graceful picture, in which he appeared reclining on a divan, with a beautiful Greek woman fondly couched at his feet, and soothing him with the witchery of her guitar; having satisfied himself with the ideal picture thus created, he would pass into action; the guitar he would buy instantly, and would give such intimations of his wish to be wedded to a Greek, as could not fail to produce great excitement in the families of the beautiful Smyrniotes. Then again (and just in time perhaps to save him from the yoke), his dream would pass away, and another would come in its stead; he would suddenly feel the yearnings of a father's love, and willing by force of gold to transcend all natural preliminaries, he would give instructions for the purchase of some dutiful child that could be warranted to love him as a parent. Then at another time he would be convinced that the attachment of menials might satisfy the longings of his affectionate heart, and thereupon he would give orders to his slave-merchant for something in the way of eternal fidelity. You may well imagine that this anxiety of Carrigaholt to purchase (not only the scenery) but the many *dramatis personæ* belonging to his dreams, with all their goodness, and graces complete, necessarily gave an immense stimulus to the trade and intrigue of Smyrna, and created a demand for human virtues which the moral resources of the place were totally inadequate to supply. Every day after breakfast, this lover of the Good and the Beautiful held a levee, which was often exceedingly amusing; in his ante-room, there would be not only the sellers

of pipes, and slippers, and shawls, and such like Oriental merchandize, not only embroiderers, and cunning workmen patiently striving to realize his visions of Albanian dresses—not only the servants offering for places, and the slave-dealer tendering his sable ware, but there would be the Greek master, waiting to teach his pupil the grammar of the soft Ionian tongue, in which he was to delight the wife of his imagination, and the music-master who was to teach him some sweet replies to the anticipated sounds of the fancied guitar; and then above all, and proudly eminent with undisputed preference of *entrée*, and fraught with the mysterious tidings on which the realization of the whole drama might depend, was the mysterious match-maker,* enticing, and postponing the suitor, yet ever keeping alive in his soul the love of that pictured virtue whose beauty (unseen by eyes) was half revealed to the Imagination.

You would have thought that this practical dreaming must have soon brought Carrigaholt to a bad end, but he was in much less danger than you would suppose; for besides that the new visions of happiness almost always came in time to counteract the fatal completion of the preceding scheme, his high breeding and his delicately sensitive taste almost always came to his aid, at times, when he was left without any other protection, and the efficacy of these qualities in keeping a man out of harm's way is really immense; in all baseness and imposture there is a coarse, vulgar spirit, which, however artfully concealed for a time, must sooner or later show itself in some little circumstance, sufficiently plain to occasion an instant jar upon the minds of those whose taste is lively and true; to such men a shock of this kind disclosing the *ugliness* of a cheat, is more effectively convincing than any mere proofs could be.

Thus guarded from isle to isle, and through Greece, and through Albania, this practical Plato, with a purse in his hand, carried on his mad chase after the Good and the Beautiful, and yet returned in safety to his home. But now, poor fellow! the lowly grave, that is the end of men's romantic hopes, has closed

* Marriages in the East are arranged by professed match-makers; many of these, I believe, are Jewesses.

over all his rich fancies, and all his high aspirations; he is utterly married! No more hope, no more change for him—no more relays—he must go on Vetturini-wise to the appointed end of his journey!

Smyrna, I think, may be called the chief town, and capital of the Grecian race, against which you will be cautioned so carefully as soon as you touch the Levant. You will say that I ought not to confound as one people the Greeks living under a constitutional government, with the unfortunate Rayahs who “groan under the Turkish yoke,” but I can’t see that political events have hitherto produced any strongly marked difference of character. If I could venture to rely (which I feel that I cannot at all do) upon my own observation, I should tell you that there was more heartiness and strength in the Greeks of the Ottoman Empire than in those of the new kingdom—the truth is, that there is a greater field for commercial enterprise, and even for Greek ambitions, under the Ottoman sceptre, than is to be found in the dominions of Otho. Indeed the people, by their frequent migrations from the limits of the constitutional kingdom, to the territories of the Porte, seem to show, that, on the whole, they prefer “groaning under the Turkish yoke,” to the honor of “being the only true source of legitimate power,” in their own land.

For myself, I love the race; in spite of all their vices, and even in spite of all their meanness, I remember the blood that is in them, and still love the Greeks. The Osmanlees are, of course, by nature, by religion, and by politics, the strong foes of the Hellenic people, and as the Greeks, poor fellows! happen to be a little deficient in some of the virtues which facilitate the transaction of commercial business (such as veracity, fidelity, &c.), it naturally follows that they are highly unpopular with the European merchants. Now, these are the persons through whom, either directly or indirectly, is derived the greater part of the information which you gather in the Levant, and therefore you must make up your mind to hear an almost universal and unbroken testimony against the character of the people, whose ancestors invented Virtue. And strange to say, the Greeks themselves do not attempt to disturb this general una-

nimity of opinion by any dissent on their part. Question a Greek on the subject, and he will tell you at once that the people are "traditori," and will then, perhaps, endeavor to shake off his fair share of the imputation, by asserting that his father had been dragoman to some foreign embassy, and that he (the son), therefore, by the law of nations, had ceased to be Greek.

"E dunque no siete traditore?"

"Possibile, Signor, ma almeno Io no sono Greco."

Not even the diplomatic representatives of the Hellenic kingdom are free from the habit of depreciating their brethren. I recollect, that at one of the ports in Syria, a Greek vessel was rather unfairly kept in quarantine by order of the Board of Health, which consisted entirely of Europeans. A consular agent from the kingdom of Greece had lately hoisted his flag in the town, and the captain of the vessel drew up a remonstrance, which he requested his consul to present to the Board.

"Now, *is* this reasonable?" said the consul, "is it reasonable that I should place myself in collision with all the principal European gentlemen of the place for the sake of you, a Greek?" The skipper was greatly vexed at the failure of his application, but he scarcely even questioned the justice of the ground which his consul had taken. Well, it happened some time afterwards, that I found myself at the same port, having gone thither with the view of embarking for the port of Syra. I was anxious of course to elude as carefully as possible the quarantine detention which threatened me on my arrival, and hearing that the Greek consul had a brother who was a man in authority at Syra, I got myself presented to the former, and took the liberty of asking him to give me such a letter of introduction to his relative at Syra, as might possibly have the effect of shortening the term of my quarantine, he acceded to this request with the utmost kindness and courtesy; but when he replied to my thanks by saying that "in serving an Englishman he was doing no more than his strict duty commanded," not even my gratitude could prevent me from calling to mind his treatment of the poor captain who had the misfortune of *not* being alien in blood to his consul, and appointed protector.

I think that the change which has taken place in the charac-

ter of the Greeks has been occasioned, in great measure, by the doctrines and practice of their religion. The Greek Church has animated the Muscovite peasant, and inspired him with hopes and ideas, which, however humble, are still better than none at all ; but the faith, and the forms, and the strange ecclesiastical literature which act so advantageously upon the mere clay of the Russian serf, seem to hang like lead upon the ethereal spirit of the Greek. Never, in any part of the world, have I seen religious performances so painful to witness as those of the Greeks. The horror, however, with which one shudders at their worship, is attributable, in some measure, to the mere effect of costume. In all the Ottoman dominions, and very frequently too, in the Kingdom of Otho, the Greeks wear turbans, or other head-dresses, and shave their heads, leaving only a rat's-tail at the crown of the head ; they of course keep themselves covered within doors, as well as abroad, and never remove their head-gear, merely on account of being in a church : but when the Greek stops to worship at his proper shrine, then, and then only, he always uncovers ; and as you see him thus with shaven skull, and savage tail pending from his crown, kissing a thing of wood and glass, and cringing with base prostrations, and apparent terror, before a miserable picture, you see superstition in a shape, which, outwardly at least, looks sadly abject, and repulsive.

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The fasts, too, of the Greek Church, produce an ill effect upon the character of the people, for they are carried to such an extent, as to bring about a bonâ fide mortification of the flesh ; the febrile irritation of the frame operating in conjunction with the depression of spirits occasioned by abstinence, will so far answer

the objects of the rite, as to engender some religious excitement, but this is of a morbid and gloomy character, and it seems to be certain, that along with the increase of sanctity, there comes a fiercer desire for the perpetration of dark crimes. The number of murders committed during Lent is greater, I am told, than at any other time of the year. A man under the influence of a bean dietary (for this is the principal food of the Greeks during their fasts), will be in an apt humor for enriching the shrine of his Saint, and passing a knife through his next door neighbor. The moneys deposited upon the shrines are appropriated by priests; the priests are married men, and have families to provide for; they "take the good with the bad," and continue to recommend fasts.

Then, too, the Greek Church enjoins her followers to keep holy such a vast number of Saints' days, as practically to shorten the lives of the people very materially. I believe that one third out of the number of days in the year are "kept holy," or rather, *kept stupid*, in honor of the Saints; no great portion of the time thus set apart is spent in religious exercises, and the people don't betake themselves to any animating pastimes, which might serve to strengthen the frame, or invigorate the mind, or exalt the taste. On the contrary, the Saints' days of the Greeks in Smyrna, are passed in the same manner as the Sabbaths of well-behaved Protestant housemaids in London—that is to say, in a steady and serious contemplation of street scenery. The men perform this duty *at the doors* of their houses,—the women *at the windows*, which the custom of Greek towns has so decidedly appropriated to them as the proper station of their sex, that a man would be looked upon as utterly effeminate if he ventured to choose that situation for the keeping of the Saints' days. I was present one day at a treaty for the hire of some apartments at Smyrna, which was carried on between Carrigaholt, and the Greek woman to whom the rooms belonged. Carrigaholt objected that the windows commanded no view of the street: immediately the brow of the majestic matron was clouded, and with all the scorn of a Spartan mother, she coolly asked Carrigaholt and said, "Art thou a tender damsel that thou wouldest sit, and gaze from windows?" The man whom

she addressed, however, had not gone to Greece with any intention of placing himself under the laws of Lycurgus, and was not to be diverted from his views by a Spartan rebuke, so he took care to find himself windows after his own heart, and there, I believe, for many a month, he kept the Saints' days, and all the days intervening, after the fashion of Grecian women.

Oh! let me be charitable to all who write, and to all who lecture, and to all who preach, since even I, a lay-man not forced to write at all, can hardly avoid chiming in with some tuneful cant! I have had the heart to talk about the pernicious effects of the Greek holidays, to which I owe some of my most beautiful visions! I will let the words stand, as an humbling proof that I am subject to that immutable law which compels a man with a pen in his hand to be uttering every now and then some sentiment not his own. It seems as though the power of expressing regrets and desires by written symbols were coupled with a condition that the writer should from time to time express the regrets and desires of other people—as though, like a French peasant under the old regime, one were bound to perform a certain amount of work upon the public highways. I rebel as stoutly as I can against this horrible *corvée*—I try not to deceive you—I try to set down the thoughts which are fresh within me, and not to pretend any wishes, or griefs, which I do not really feel, but no sooner do I cease from watchfulness in this regard, than my right hand is, as it were, seized by some false demon, and even now, you see, I have been forced to put down such words and sentences as I ought to have written if really and truly I had wished to disturb the Saints' days of the beautiful Smyrniotes!

Which, Heaven forbid! for as you move through the narrow streets of the city, at these times of festival, the transom-shaped windows suspended over your head, on either side, are filled with the beautiful descendants of the old Ionian race; all (even yonder Empress that sits throned at the window of that humblest mud cottage) are attired with seeming magnificence; their classic heads are crowned with scarlet, and loaded with jewels,

or coins of gold—the whole wealth of the wearers ;*—their features are touched with a savage pencil, which hardens the outline of eyes and eye-brows and lends an unnatural fire to the stern, grave looks, with which they pierce your brain. Endure their fiery eyes as best you may, and ride on slowly and reverently, for facing you from the side of the transom, that looks long-wise through the street, you see the one glorious shape transcendant in its beauty ; you see the massive braid of hair as it catches a touch of light on its jetty surface—and the broad, calm, angry brow—the large black eyes, deep set, and self-relying like the eyes of a conqueror, with their rich shadows of thought lying darkly around them,—you see the thin fiery nostril, and the bold line of the chin and throat disclosing all the fierceness, and all the pride, passion, and power, that can live along with the rare womanly beauty of those sweetly turned lips. But then there is a terrible stillness in this breathing image ; it seems like the stillness of a savage that sits intent, and brooding day by day, upon some one fearful scheme of vengeance, but yet more like it seems to the stillness of an Immortal, whose will must be known, and obeyed without sign or speech. Bow down!—Bow down, and adore the young Persephone, transcendant Queen of Shades!

* A Greek woman wears her whole fortune upon her person, in the shape of jewels, or gold coins ; I believe that this mode of investment is adopted in great measure for safety's sake. It has the advantage of enabling a suitor to *reckon*, as well as to admire the objects of his affection.

CHAPTER VI.

Greek Mariners.

I SAILED from Smyrna in the *Amphitrite*, a Greek brigantine, which was confidently said to be bound for the coast of Syria, but I knew that this announcement was not to be relied upon with positive certainty, for the Greek mariners are practically free from the stringency of ship's papers, and where they will, there they go. However, I had the whole of the cabin for myself, and my attendant, Mysseri, subject only to the society of the Captain at the hour of dinner; being at ease in this respect, being furnished too with plenty of books, and finding an unfailing source of interest in the thorough Greekness of my Captain and my crew, I felt less anxious than most people would have been about the probable length of the cruise; I knew enough of Greek navigation to be sure that our vessel would cling to Earth like a child to its mother's knee, and that I should touch at many an isle before I set foot upon the Syrian coast; but I had no invidious preference for Europe, Asia, or Africa, and I felt that I could defy the winds to blow me upon a coast that was blank, and void of interest. My patience was extremely useful to me, for the cruise altogether endured some forty days, and that in the midst of winter.

According to me, the most interesting of all the Greeks (male Greeks) are the mariners, because their pursuits and their social condition are so nearly the same as those of their glorious ancestors; you will say, that the occupation of commerce must have smoothed down the salience of their minds, and this would be so perhaps, if their mercantile affairs were conducted according to the fixed business-like routine of Europeans; but the ventures of the Greeks are surrounded by such a multitude of imagined dangers, and (from the absence of regular marts in

which the true value of merchandize can be ascertained) are so entirely speculative, and besides, are conducted in a manner so wholly determined upon by the wayward fancies and wishes of the crew, that they belong to Enterprise, rather than to industry, and are very far indeed from tending to deaden any freshness of character.

The vessels in which war and piracy were carried on during the years of the Greek Revolution, became merchantmen at the end of the war—but the tactics of the Greeks, as naval warriors, were so exceedingly cautious, and their habits, as commercial mariners, are so wild, that the change has been more slight than you might imagine. The first care of Greeks (Greek Rayahs) when they undertake a shipping enterprise, is to procure for their vessel the protection of some European Power; this is easily managed by a little intriguing with the Dragoman of one of the Embassies at Constantinople, and the craft soon glories in the ensign of Russia, or the dazzling Tricolor, or the Union Jack; thus, to the great delight of her crew, she enters upon the ocean world with a flaring lie at her peak, but the appearance of the vessel does no discredit to the borrowed flag; she is frailer, perhaps, than the rest of her sex, but she does not look the worse for this in harbor; she is gracefully built, and smartly rigged; she always carries guns, and in short, gives good promise of mischief and speed.

The privileges attached to the vessel and her crew, by virtue of the borrowed flag, are so great as to imply a degree of liberty, greater than that which is enjoyed by individuals in our more strictly civilized countries, so that there is no pretence for saying that the development of the true character belonging to Greek mariners is prevented by the dominion of the Ottomans; they are free, too, from the power of the great capitalist whose imperial sway is more withering than despotism itself, to the enterprises of humble adventurers. The capital employed is supplied by those whose labor is to render it productive; the crew receive no wages, but have all a share in the venture, and in general, I believe, they are the owners of the whole freight; they choose a Captain to whom they entrust just power enough to keep the vessel on her course in fine weather, but not quite

enough for a gale of wind ; they also elect a cook and a mate ; the cook whom we had on board was particularly careful about the ship's reckoning, and when, under the influence of the keen sea breeze, we grew fondly expectant of an instant dinner, the great author of pilafs would be standing on deck with an ancient quadrant in his hands, calmly affecting to take an observation. But then to make up for this, the Captain would be exercising a controlling influence over the soup, so that all, in the end, went well. Our mate was a Hydriot, a native of that island rock which grows nothing but mariners and mariners' wives. His character seemed to be exactly that which is generally attributed to the Hydriot race ; he was fierce, and gloomy, and lonely in his ways. One of his principal duties seemed to be that of acting as counter-captain, or leader of the opposition, denouncing the first symptoms of tyranny, and protecting even the cabin-boy from oppression.—Besides this, when things went smoothly, he would begin to prognosticate evil, in order that his more light-hearted comrades might not be puffed up with the seeming good fortune of the moment.

It seemed to me that the personal freedom of these sailors, who own no superiors except those of their own choice, is as like as may be to that of their sea-faring ancestors. And even in their mode of navigation they have admitted no such an entire change as you would suppose probable ; it is true that they have so far availed themselves of modern discoveries as to look to the compass instead of the stars, and that they have superseded the immortal Gods of their forefathers by St. Nicholas in his glass case,* but they are not yet so confident either in their needle or their Saint, as to love an open sea, and they still hug their shores as fondly as the Argonauts of old. Indeed, they have a most unsailorlike love for the land, and I really believe that in a gale of wind they would rather have a rock-bound coast on their lee, than no coast at all. According to the notions of an English seaman, this kind of navigation would

* St. Nicholas is the great patron of Greek sailors ; a small picture of him enclosed in a glass case is hung up like a barometer at one end of the cabin.

soon bring the vessel on which it might be practised, to an evil end. The Greek, however, is unaccountably successful in escaping the consequences of being "jammed in," as it is called, upon a lee shore; he is favored, I suppose, by the nature of the coast along which he sails, especially those of the many islands through which he threads his way in the Ægean, for there is generally, I think, deep water home to the very cliffs, and besides there are innumerable coves in which the dexterous sailor, who knows and loves the land so well, will contrive to find a shelter.

These seamen, like their forefathers, rely upon no winds unless they are right a-stern, or on the quarter; they rarely go *on* a wind if it blows at all fresh, and if the adverse breeze approaches to a gale, they at once fumigate St. Nicholas, and put up the helm. The consequence, of course, is, that under the ever-varying winds of the Ægean they are blown about in the most whimsical manner. I used to think that Ulysses, with his ten years' voyage, had taken his time in making Ithaca, but my experience in Greek navigation soon made me understand that he had, in point of fact, a pretty good "average passage."

Such are now the mariners of the Ægean; free, equal amongst themselves, navigating the seas of their forefathers with the same heroic, and yet child-like spirit of venture, the same half-trustful reliance upon heavenly aid, they are the liveliest images of true old Greeks that time and the new religions have spared to us.

With one exception, our crew were "a solemn company,"* and yet, sometimes, when all things went well, they would relax their austerity, and show a disposition to fun, or rather to quiet humor; when this happened, they invariably had recourse to one of their number, who went by the name of "Admiral Nicolou;" he was an amusing fellow, the poorest, I believe, and the least thoughtful of the crew, but full of rich humor; his oft-told story of the events by which he had gained the sobriquet of "Admiral," never failed to delight his hearers, and when he was desired to repeat it for my benefit, the rest of the

* Hanmer.

crew crowded round with as much interest as if they were listening to the tale for the first time. A number of Greek brigs and brigantines were at anchor in the bay of Beyrout ; a festival of some kind, particularly attractive to the sailors, was going on in the town, and whether with or without leave I know not, but the crews of all the craft, except that of Nicolou, had gone ashore ; on board his vessel, however, which carried dollars, there was, it would seem, a more careful, or more influential Captain, who was able to enforce his determination, that one man, at least, should be left on board. Nicolou's good nature was with him so powerful an impulse, that he could not resist the delight of volunteering to stay with the vessel, whilst his comrades went ashore ; his proposal was accepted, and the crew and Captain soon left him alone on the deck of his vessel. The sailors, gathering together from their several ships, were amusing themselves in the town, when suddenly there came down from betwixt the mountains, one of those sudden hurricanes which sometimes occur in southern climes ; Nicolou's vessel, together with four of the craft which had been left unmanned, broke from her moorings, and all five of the vessels were carried out seaward ; the town is on a salient point at the southern side of the Bay, so that "the Admiral" was close under the eyes of the inhabitants, and the shore-gone sailors, when he gallantly drifted out at the head of his little fleet ; if Nicolou could not entirely control the manœuvres of the Squadron, there was at least no human power to divide his authority, and thus it was that he took rank as "Admiral." Nicolou cut his cable, and thus for the time saved his vessel ; for the rest of the fleet, under his command, were quickly wrecked, whilst "the Admiral" got away clear to the open sea. The violence of the squall soon passed off, but Nicolou felt that his chance of one day resigning his high duties as an admiral for the enjoyments of private life on the steadfast shore, mainly depended upon his success in working the brig with his own hands, so after calling on his namesake, the saint (not for the first time, I take it), he got up some canvass, and took the helm ; he became equal, he told us, to a score of Nicoulous, and the vessel, as he said, was "manned with his terrors." For two days, it seems, he cruised

at large, but at last, either by his seamanship, or by the natural instinct of the Greek mariners for finding land, he brought his craft close to an unknown shore, which promised well for his purpose of running in the vessel, and he was preparing to give her a good berth on the beach, when he saw a gang of ferocious looking fellows coming down to the point for which he was making. Poor Nicolou was a perfectly unlettered and untutored genius, and for that reason, perhaps, a keen listener to tales of terror ; his mind had been impressed with some horrible legend of cannibalism, and he now did not doubt for a moment that the men awaiting him on the beach were the monsters at whom he had shuddered in the days of his childhood. The coast on which Nicolou was running his vessel, was somewhere, I fancy, at the foot of the Anzairie mountains, and the fellows who were preparing to give him a reception were probably very rough specimens of humanity ; it is likely enough that they may have given themselves the trouble of putting "the Admiral" to death, for the purpose of simplifying their claim to the vessel, and preventing litigation, but the notion of their cannibalism was of course utterly unfounded ; Nicolou's terror had, however, so graven the idea on his mind, that he could never afterwards dismiss it. Having once determined the character of his expectant hosts, the Admiral naturally thought that it would be better to keep their dinner waiting any length of time, than to attend their feast in the character of a roasted Greek, so he put about his vessel, and tempted the deep once more. After a farther cruise the lonely commander ran his vessel upon some rocks at another part of the coast, where she was lost with all her treasure, and Nicolou was but too glad to scramble ashore, though without one dollar in his girdle. These adventures seem flat enough as I repeat them, but the hero expressed his terrors by such odd terms of speech, and such strangely humorous gestures, that the story came from his lips with an unfailing zest, so that the crew who had heard the tale so often, could still enjoy to their hearts the rich fright of the Admiral, and still shuddered with unabated horror when he came to the loss of the dollars.

The power of listening to long stories (for which by the bye I am giving you large credit) is common I fancy to most sailors,

and the Greeks have it to a great degree, for they can be perfectly patient under a narrative of two or three hours' duration. These long stories are mostly founded upon Oriental topics, and in one of them I recognized with some alterations an old friend of the "Arabian Nights;" I inquired as to the source from which the story had been derived, and the crew all agreed that it had been handed down unwritten from Greek to Greek; their account of the matter does not, perhaps, go very far towards showing the real origin of the tale, but when I afterwards took up the "Arabian Nights," I became strongly impressed with a notion that they must have sprung from the brain of a Greek. It seems to me that these stories, whilst they disclose a complete and habitual *knowledge* of things Asiatic, have about them so much of freshness and life, so much of the stirring and volatile European character, that they cannot have owed their conception to a mere Oriental, who, for creative purposes, is a thing dead and dry—a mental mummy that may have been a live King just after the flood, but has since lain balmed in spice. At the time of the Caliphat the Greek race was familiar enough to Bagdad; they were the merchants, the pedlars, the barbers, and intriguers-general of South-western Asia, and therefore the Oriental materials with which the Arabian tales are wrought, must have been completely at the command of the inventive people to whom I would attribute their origin.

We were nearing the isle of Cyprus, when there arose half a gale of wind, with a heavy, chopping sea; my Greek seamen considered that the weather amounted not to a half, but to an integral gale of wind at the very least, so they put up the helm, and scudded for twenty hours; when we neared the main land of Anadoli, the gale ceased, and a favorable breeze sprang up, which brought us off Cyprus once more. Afterwards the wind changed again, but we were still able to lay our course by sailing close-hauled.

We were, at length, in such a position, that by holding on our course for about half an hour, we should get under the lee of the island, and find ourselves in smooth water, but the wind had been gradually freshening; it now blew hard, and there was a heavy sea running.

As the grounds for alarm arose, the crew gathered together in one close group ; they stood pale and grim under their hooded capotes like monks awaiting a massacre, anxiously looking by turns along the pathway of the storm, and then upon each other, and then upon the eye of the Captain who stood by the helmsman. Presently the Hydriot came aft, more moody than ever, the bearer of fierce remonstrance against the continuing of the struggle ; he received a resolute answer, and still we held our course. Soon there came a heavy sea, that caught the bow of the brigantine as she lay jammed in betwixt the waves ; she bowed her head low under the waters, and shuddered through all her timbers—then gallantly stood up again over the striving sea, with bowsprit entire. But where were the crew ? It was a crew no longer, but rather a gathering of Greek citizens ;—the shout of the seaman was changed for the murmuring of the people—the spirit of the old Demos was alive. The men came aft in a body, and loudly asked that the vessel should be put about, and that the storm be no longer tempted. Now, then, for speeches :—the Captain, his eyes flashing fire, his frame all quivering with emotion—wielding his every limb, like another, and a louder voice, pours forth the eloquent torrent of his threats, and his reasons, his commands, and his prayers ; he promises—he vows—he swears that there is safety in holding on—safety, *if Greeks will be brave !* The men hear, and are moved, but the gale rouses itself once more, and again the raging sea comes trampling over the timbers that are the life of all. The fierce Hydriot advances one step more near to the Captain, and the angry growl of the people goes floating down the wind, but they listen—they waver once more, and once more resolve, then waver again, thus doubtfully hanging between the terrors of the storm, and the persuasion of glorious speech, as though it were the Athenian that talked, and Philip of Macedon that thundered on the weather bow.

Brave thoughts winged on Grecian words gained their natural mastery over Terror ; the brigantine held on her course, and reached smooth water at last. I landed at Limesol, the westernmost port of Cyprus, leaving the vessel to sail for Larnecca, where she was to remain for some days.

CHAPTER VII.

Cyprus.

THERE was a Greek at Limesol, who hoisted his flag as an English Vice-Consul, and he insisted upon my accepting his hospitality ; with some difficulty, and chiefly by assuring him that I could not delay my departure beyond an early hour in the afternoon, I induced him to allow my dining with his family, instead of banqueting all alone with the representative of my sovereign, in consular state and dignity ; the lady of the house, it seemed, had never sat at table with an European ; she was very shy about the matter, and tried hard to get out of the scrape, but the husband, I fancy, reminded her, that she was theoretically an English-woman by virtue of the flag which waved over her roof, and that she was bound to show her nationality by sitting at meat with me ; finding herself inexorably condemned to bear with the dreaded gaze of European eyes, she tried to save her innocent children from the hard fate which awaited herself, but I obtained that all of them (and I think there were four or five) should sit at the table. You will meet with abundance of stately receptions, and of generous hospitality, too, in the East, but rarely, very rarely in those regions (or even, so far as I know, in any part of southern Europe), does one gain an opportunity of seeing the familiar and indoor life of the people.

This family party of the good consul's (or rather of mine, for I originated the idea, though he furnished the materials) went off very well ; the mamma was shy at first, but she veiled the awkwardness which she felt by affecting to scold her children, who had all of them, I think, immortal names—names, too, which they owed to tradition, and certainly not to any classical enthusiasm of their parents ; every instant I was delighted by some such phrases as these—"Themistocles, my love, don't

fight,"—"Alcibiades, can't you sit still?"—"Socrates, put down the cup."—"Oh, fie! Aspasia, don't, Oh! don't be naughty!" It is true that the names were pronounced, Socrāhtie, Aspahsie—that is, according to accent, and not according to quantity, but I suppose it is scarcely now to be doubted that they were so sounded in ancient times.

To me it seems, that of all the lands I know (you will see in a minute how I connect this piece of prose with the Isle of Cyprus), there is none in which mere wealth—mere unaided wealth, is held half so cheaply—none in which a poor devil of a millionaire without birth, or ability, occupies so humble a place as in England. My Greek host and I were sitting together, I think upon the roof of the house (for that is the lounging place in Eastern climes), when the former assumed a serious air, and intimated a wish to converse upon the subject of the British Constitution, with which he assured me that he was thoroughly acquainted; he presently, however, informed me that there was one anomalous circumstance attendant upon the practical working of our political system which he had never been able to hear explained in a manner satisfactory to himself. From the fact of his having found a difficulty in his subject, I began to think that my host might really know rather more of it than his announcement of a thorough knowledge had led me to expect; I felt interested at being about to hear from the lips of an intelligent Greek, quite remote from the influence of European opinions, what might seem to him the most astonishing and incomprehensible of all those results which have followed from the action of our political institutions. The anomaly—the only anomaly which had been detected by the vice-consular wisdom, consisted in the fact, that Rothschild (the late money-monger) had never been the Prime Minister of England! I gravely tried to throw some light upon the mysterious causes which had kept the worthy Israelite out of the Cabinet, but I think I could see that my explanation was not satisfactory. Go and argue with the flies of summer, that there is a Power divine, yet greater than the Sun in the heavens, but never dare hope to convince the people of the South that there is any other God than Gold.

My intended journey was to the site of the Paphian temple. I take no antiquarian interest in ruins, and care little about them, unless they are either striking in themselves, or else serve to mark some spot on which my fancy loves to dwell. I knew that the ruins of Paphos were scarcely, if at all, discernible, but there was a will, and a longing, more imperious than mere curiosity, that drove me thither.

For this, just then, was my Pagan soul's desire—that (not forfeiting my Christian's inheritance for the life to come), it were yet given me to live through this world—to live a favored mortal under the old Olympian dispensation—to speak out my resolves to the listening Jove, and hear him answer with approving thunder—to be blessed with divine counsels from the lips of Pallas Athênïe—to believe—aye, only to believe—to believe for one rapturous moment that in the gloomy depths of the grove, by the mountain's side, there were some leafy pathway that crisped beneath the glowing sandal of Aphrodëtie—Aphrodëtie, not coldly disdainful of even a mortal's love! And this vain, heathenish longing of mine was father to the thought of visiting the scene of the ancient worship.

The isle is beautiful; from the edge of the rich, flowery fields on which I trod, to the midway sides of the snowy Olympus, the ground could only here and there show an abrupt crag, or a high, straggling ridge, that up-shouldered itself from out of the wilderness of myrtles, and of the thousand bright-leaved shrubs that twined their arms together in lovesome tangles. The air that came to my lips was warm, and fragrant as the ambrosial breath of the goddess, infecting me—not (of course) with a faith in the old religion of the isle, but with a sense, and apprehension of its mystic power—a power that was still to be obeyed—obeyed by *me*, for why otherwise did I toil on with sorry horses to “where, for HER, the hundred altars glowed with Arabian incense, and breathed with the fragrance of garlands ever fresh?”*

* . . . ubi templum illi, centumque Sabæo
Thure calent aræ, sertisque recentibus halant.

ÆNEID i., 415.

I passed a sadly disenchanting night in the cabin of a Greek priest—not a priest of the Goddess, but of the Greek church—there was but one humble room, or rather shed, for man, and priest, and beast. The next morning I reached Baffa (Paphos), which is not far distant from the site of the temple ; there was a Greek husbandman there who (not for emolument, but for the sake of the protection and dignity which it afforded) had got leave from the man at Limesol to hoist his flag as a sort of Deputy-provisionary-sub-vice-pro-acting Pro-consul of the British Sovereign ; the poor fellow instantly changed his Greek head-gear for the cap of consular dignity, and insisted upon accompanying me to the ruins ; I would not have stood this, if I could have felt the faintest gleam of my yesterday's pagan piety, but I had ceased to dream, and had nothing to dread from any new disenchanters.

The ruins (the fragments of one or two prostrate pillars) stand upon a promontory, bare, and unmystified by the gloom of surrounding groves ; my Greek friend in his consular-cap stood by, respectfully waiting to see what turn my madness would take, now that I had come at last into the presence of the old stones. If you have no taste for research, and can't affect to look for inscriptions, there is some awkwardness in coming to the end of a merely sentimental pilgrimage, when the feeling, which impelled you, has gone ; you have nothing to do but to laugh the thing off as well as you can, and by the by, it is not a bad plan to turn the conversation (or rather allow the natives to turn it) towards the subject of hidden treasures ; this is a topic on which they will always speak with eagerness, and if they can fancy that you, too, take an interest in such matters, they will not only think you perfectly sane, but will begin to give you credit for some more than human powers of forcing the obscure earth to show you its hoards of gold.

When we returned to Baffa, the Pro-consul seized a club, with the quietly determined air of a brave man, resolved to do some deed of note ; he went into the yard adjoining his cottage, where there were some thin, thoughtful, canting cocks, and serious low-church-looking hens, respectfully listening, and

chickens of tender years so well brought up as scarcely to betray in their conduct the careless levity of youth. The Pro-consul stood for a moment quite calm—collecting his strength; then suddenly he rushed into the midst of the congregation, and began to deal death and destruction on all sides; he spared neither sex nor age; the dead and dying were immediately removed from the field of slaughter, and in less than an hour, I think, they were brought to the table, deeply buried in mounds of snowy rice.

My host was in all respects a fine, generous fellow; I could not bear the idea of impoverishing him by my visit, and I consulted my faithful Mysseri, who not only assured me that I might safely offer money to the Pro-consul, but recommended that I should give no more to him than to “the others,” meaning any other peasant; I felt, however, that there was something about the man, besides the flag and the cap, which made me shrink from offering coin, and as I mounted my horse on departing, I gave him the only thing fit for a present which I happened to have with me, a rather handsome clasp-dagger, which I had brought from Vienna; the poor fellow was ineffably grateful, and I had some difficulty in tearing myself from out of the reach of his thanks; at last I gave him what I supposed to be the last farewell, and rode on, but I had not gained more than about a hundred yards, when my host came bounding and shouting after me, with a goat’s milk cheese in his hand, which he implored me to accept. In old times the shepherd of Theocritus, or (to speak less dishonestly) the shepherd of the “*Poetæ Græci*,” sung his best song; I, in this latter age, presented my best dagger, and both of us received the same rustic reward.

It had been known that I should return to Limesol, and when I arrived there I found that a noble old Greek had been hospitably plotting to have me for his guest; I willingly accepted his offer. The day of my arrival happened to be the birth-day of my host, and in consequence of this there was a constant influx of visitors who came to offer their congratulations; a few of these were men, but most of them were young, graceful girls;

almost all of them went through the ceremony with the utmost precision and formality ; each in succession spoke her blessing, in the tone of a person repeating a set formula—then deferentially accepted the invitation to sit—partook of the proffered sweetmeats, and the cold, glittering water—remained for a few minutes either in silence, or engaged in very thin conversation—then arose, delivered a second benediction followed by an elaborate farewell, and departed.

The bewitching power attributed at this day to the women of Cyprus, is curious in connection with the worship of the sweet goddess who called their isle her own ; the Cypriote is not, I think, nearly so beautiful in face as the Ionian queens of Izmir, but she is tall, and slightly formed—there is a high-souled meaning and expression—a seeming consciousness of gentle empire that speaks in the wavy lines of the shoulder, and winds itself like Cytherea's own cestus around the slender waist—then the richly abounding hair (not enviously gathered together under the head-dress) descends the neck, and passes the waist in sumptuous braids ; of all other women with Grecian blood in their veins, the costume is graciously beautiful, but these, the maidens of Limesol—their robes are more gently, more sweetly imagined, and fall like Julia's Cashmere in soft, luxurious folds. The common voice of the Levant allows that in face the women of Cyprus are less beautiful than their brilliant sisters of Smyrna, and yet, says the Greek, he may trust himself to one and all of the bright cities of the Ægean, and may yet weigh anchor with a heart entire, but that so surely as he ventures upon the enchanted Isle of Cyprus, so surely will he know the rapture, or the bitterness of Love. The charm, they say, owes its power to that which the people call the astonishing “ politics ” (πολιτικη) of the women, meaning, I fancy, their tact, and their witching ways ; the word, however, plainly fails to express one half of that which the speakers would say ; I have smiled to hear the Greek, with all his plenteousness of fancy, and all the wealth of his generous language, yet vainly struggling to describe the ineffable spell which the Parisians dispose of in their own smart way, by a summary “ *Je ne sçai quoi*.”

I went to Larnacca, the chief city of the isle, and over the water at last to Beyrout.

* * The writer takes leave to suggest that none should attempt to read the following account of the late Lady Hester Stanhope, except those who may already chance to feel an interest in the personage to whom it relates. The chapter (which has been written and printed for the reasons mentioned in the preface) is chiefly filled with the detailed conversation, or rather discourse of a highly eccentric gentlewoman.

CHAPTER VIII.

Lady Hester Stanhope.

BEYROUT on its land side is hemmed in by the Druses, who occupy all the neighbouring highlands.

Often enough I saw the ghostly images of the women with their exalted horns stalking through the streets, and I saw too, in travelling, the affrighted groups of the mountaineers as they fled before me, under the fear that my party might be a company of Income-tax commissioners, or a press-gang enforcing the conscription for Mehemet Ali, but nearly all my knowledge of the people, except in regard of their mere costume, and outward appearance, is drawn from books, and despatches, to which I have the honor to refer you.

I received hospitable welcome at Beyrout, from the Europeans, as well as from the Syrian Christians, and I soon discovered that their standing topic of interest was the Lady Hester Stanhope, who lived in an old convent on the Lebanon range, at the distance of about a day's journey from the town. The lady's habit of refusing to see Europeans added the charm of mystery to a character, which, even without that aid, was sufficiently distinguished to command attention.

Many years of Lady Hester's early womanhood had been passed with Lady Chatham at Burton Pynsent, and during that inglorious period of the heroine's life, her commanding character, and (as they would have called it, in the language of those days), her "condescending kindness" towards my mother's family, had increased in them those strong feelings of respect and attachment, which her rank and station alone would have easily won from people of the middle class. You may suppose how deeply the quiet women in Somersetshire must have been interested, when they slowly learned by vague and uncertain

tidings that the intrepid girl who had been used to break their vicious horses for them, was reigning in sovereignty over the wandering tribes of Western Asia! I know that her name was made almost as familiar to me in my childhood as the name of Robinson Crusoe; both were associated with the spirit of adventure, but whilst the imagined life of the cast-away mariner never failed to seem glaringly real, the true story of the English-woman ruling over Arabs always sounded to me like fable. I never had heard, nor indeed, I believe, had the rest of the world ever heard anything like a certain account of the Heroine's adventures; all I know was, that in one of the drawers which were the delight of my childhood, along with attas of roses, and fragrant wonders from Hindostan, there were letters carefully treasured, and trifling presents which I was taught to think valuable because they had come from the Queen of the Desert, who dwelt in tents, and reigned over wandering Arabs.

The subject, however, died away, and from the ending of my childhood up to the period of my arrival in the Levant, I had seldom even heard a mentioning of the Lady Hester Stanhope, but now wherever I went, I was met with the name so familiar in sound, and yet so full of mystery from the vague, fairy-tale sort of idea which it brought to my mind; I heard it too connected with fresh wonders, for it was said that the woman was now acknowledged as an inspired being by the people of the Mountains, and it was even hinted with horror that she claimed to be *more than a prophet*.

I felt at once that my mother would be sadly sorry to hear that I had been within a day's ride of her early friend without offering to see her, and I therefore despatched a letter to the Recluse, mentioning the maiden name of my mother (whose marriage was subsequent to Lady Hester's departure), and saying that if there existed on the part of her Ladyship any wish to hear of her old Somersetshire acquaintance, I should make a point of visiting her. My letter was sent by a foot messenger who was to take an unlimited time for his journey, so that it was not, I think, until either the third or the fourth day that the answer arrived. A couple of horsemen covered with mud suddenly dashed into the little court of the "Locanda," in which I

was staying, bearing themselves as ostentatiously as though they were carrying a cartel from the Devil to the Angel Michael ; one of these (the other being his attendant) was an Italian by birth (though now completely orientalized), who lived in my Lady's establishment as a Doctor nominally, but practically as an upper servant ; he presented me a very kind and appropriate letter of invitation.

It happened that I was rather unwell at this time, so that I named a more distant day for my visit than I should otherwise have done, and after all, I did not start at the time fixed ; whilst still remaining at Beyrout I received this letter, which certainly betrays no symptom of the pretensions to Divine power, which were popularly attributed to the writer :—

“SIR,—I hope I shall be disappointed in seeing you on Wednesday, for the late rains have rendered the River Damoor if not dangerous, at least, very unpleasant to pass for a person who has been lately indisposed, for if the animal swims, you would be immersed in the waters. The weather will probably change after the 21st of the moon, and after a couple of days the roads and the river will be passable, therefore I shall expect you either Saturday or Monday.

“It will be a great satisfaction to me to have an opportunity of inquiring after your mother, who was a sweet, lovely girl when I knew her.

Believe me, Sir,

Yours sincerely,

HESTER LUCY STANHOPE.”

Early one morning I started from Beyrout. There are no regularly established relays of horses in Syria, at least not in the line which I took, and you therefore hire your cattle for the whole journey, or, at all events, for your journey to some large town. Under these circumstances you have no occasion for a Tatar (whose principal utility consists in his power to compel the supply of horses). In other respects, the mode of travelling through Syria differs very little from that which I have described as prevailing in Turkey. I hired my horses and mules (for I had some of both) for the whole of the journey from Beyrout to Jerusalem ; the owner of the beasts (who had a couple of fellows under him) was the most dignified member of my party ; he was, indeed, a magnificent old man, and was called

Shereef, or "holy,"—a title of honor, which, with the privilege of bearing the green turban, he well deserved, not only from the blood of the Prophet which glowed in his veins, but from the well-known sanctity of his life, and the length of his blessed beard.

Mysseri, of course, still travelled with me, but the Arabic was not one of the seven languages which he spoke so perfectly, and I was, therefore, obliged to hire another interpreter. I had no difficulty in finding a proper man for the purpose—one Demetrius,—or, as he was always called, Dthemetri, a native of Zante, who had been tossed about by fortune in all directions. He spoke the Arabic very well, and communicated with me in Italian. The man was a very zealous member of the Greek church. He had been a tailor. He was as ugly as the devil, having a thoroughly Tatar countenance, which expressed the agony of his body or mind, as the case might be, in the most ludicrous manner imaginable; he embellished the natural caricature of his person, by suspending about his neck, and shoulders, and waist, quantities of little bundles and parcels, which he thought too valuable to be entrusted to the jerking of pack-saddles. The mule which fell to his lot on this journey, every now and then, forgetting that his rider was a saint, and remembering that he was a tailor, took a quiet roll upon the ground, and stretched his limbs calmly and lazily, as if he were preparing to hear a long sermon. Dthemetri never got seriously hurt, but the subversion and dislocation of his bundles made him for the moment a sad spectacle of ruin, and when he regained his legs, his wrath with the mule became very amusing. He always addressed the beast in language which implied, that he, as a Christian and saint, had been personally insulted and oppressed by a Mahometan mule. Dthemetri, however, on the whole, proved to be a most able and capital servant; I suspected him of now and then leading me out of my way, in order that he might have an opportunity of visiting the shrine of a saint, and on one occasion, as you will see by and by, he was induced, by religious motives, to commit a gross breach of duty; but putting these pious faults out of the question (and they were faults of the right side), he was always faithful and true to me.

I left Saïde (the Sidon of ancient times), on my right, and about an hour, I think, before sunset, began to ascend one of the many low hills of Lebanon. On the summit before me, was a broad, grey mass of irregular building, which, from its position, as well as from the gloomy blankness of its walls, gave the idea of a neglected fortress ; it had, in fact, been a convent of great size, and like most of the religious houses in this part of the world, had been made strong enough for opposing an inert resistance to any mere casual band of assailants who might be unprovided with regular means of attack ; this was the dwelling-place of the Chatham's fiery grand-daughter.

The aspect of the first court which I entered, was such as to keep one in the idea of having to do with a fortress, rather than a mere peaceable dwelling-place. A number of fierce-looking and ill-clad Albanian soldiers were hanging about the place, and striving to bear the curse of tranquillity, as well as they could ; two or three of them, I think, were smoking their tchibouques, but the rest of them were lying torpidly upon the flat stones, like the bodies of departed brigands. I rode on to an inner part of the building, and at last, quitting my horses, was conducted through a door-way which led me at once from an open court into an apartment on the ground floor. As I entered, an oriental figure in male costume approached me from the farther end of the room with many and profound bows, but the growing shades of evening, as well as my near-sightedness, prevented me from distinguishing the features of the personage who was receiving me with this solemn welcome. I had always, however, understood that Lady Hester Stanhope wore the male attire, and I began to utter in English the common civilities which seemed to be proper on the commencement of a visit by an uninspired mortal to a renowned Prophetess, but the figure which I addressed only bowed so much the more, prostrating itself almost to the ground, but speaking to me never a word ; I feebly strived not to be outdone in gestures of respect, but presently my bowing opponent saw the error under which I was acting, and suddenly convinced me, that at all events I was not *yet* in the presence of a superhuman being, by declaring that he was not "Miladi," but was, in fact, nothing more or less god-

like than the poor Doctor, who had brought his mistress's letters to Beyrout.

Her Ladyship, in the right spirit of hospitality, now sent, and commanded me to repose for a while after the fatigues of my journey, and to dine.

The cuisine was of the Oriental kind, which is highly artificial, and I thought it very good. I rejoiced, too, in the wine of the Lebanon.

Soon after the ending of the dinner, the Doctor arrived with Miladi's compliments, and an intimation that she would be happy to receive me if I were so disposed. It had now grown dark, and the rain was falling heavily, so that I got rather wet in following my guide through the open courts which I had to pass, in order to reach the presence chamber. At last I was ushered into a small apartment, which was protected from the draughts of air through the door-way by a folding screen; passing this, I came alongside of a common European sofa, where sat the Lady Prophetess. She rose from her seat very formally—spoke to me a few words of welcome, pointed to a chair which was placed exactly opposite to her sofa, at a couple of yards distance, and remained standing up to the full of her majestic height, perfectly still and motionless, until I had taken my appointed place; she then resumed her seat, not packing herself up according to the mode of the Orientals, but allowing her feet to rest on the floor, or the footstool; at the moment of seating herself, she covered her lap with a mass of loose, white drapery, which she held in her hand. It occurred to me at the time, that she did this, in order to avoid the awkwardness of sitting in manifest trowsers under the eye of an European, but I can hardly fancy now, that with her wilful nature, she would have brooked such a compromise as this.

The woman before me had exactly the person of a Prophetess—not, indeed, of the divine Sibyl imagined by Domenichino, so sweetly distracted betwixt Love and Mystery, but of a good, business-like, practical Prophetess, long used to the exercise of her sacred calling. I have been told by those who knew Lady Hester Stanhope in her youth, that any notion of a resemblance betwixt her, and the great Chatham, must have been fanciful,

but at the time of my seeing her, the large commanding features of the gaunt woman, then sixty years old or more, certainly reminded me of the Statesman that lay dying* in the House of Lords, according to Copley's picture; her face was of the most astonishing whiteness;† she wore a very large turban, which seemed to be of pale cashmere shawls, so disposed as to conceal the hair; her dress, from the chin down to the point at which it was concealed by the drapery which she held over her lap, was a mass of white linen loosely folding—an ecclesiastical sort of affair—more like a surplice than any of those blessed creations which our souls love under the names of “dress,” and “frock,” and “boddice,” and “collar,” and “habit-shirt,” and sweet “chemisette.”

Such was the outward seeming of the personage that sat before me, and indeed she was almost bound by the fame of her actual achievements, as well as by her sublime pretensions, to look a little differently from the rest of woman-kind. There had been something of grandeur in her career: after the death of Lady Chatham, which happened in 1803, she lived under the roof of her uncle, the second Pitt, and when he resumed the Government in 1804, she became the dispenser of much patronage, and sole Secretary of State, for the department of Treasury banquets. Not having seen the Lady until late in her life, when she was fired with spiritual ambition, I can hardly fancy that she could have performed her political duties in the saloons of the Minister with much of feminine sweetness and patience; I am told, however, that she managed matters very well indeed; perhaps it was better for the lofty-minded leader of the House, to have his reception-rooms guarded by this stately creature, than by a merely clever and managing woman; it was fitting that the wholesome awe with which he filled the minds of the country gentlemen, should be aggravated by the presence of his majestic niece. But the end was approaching; the sun of Austerlitz showed the Czar madly sliding his splendid army like a weaver's shuttle, from his right hand to his left, under the

* Historically “*fainting*,” the death did not occur until long afterwards.

† I am told that in youth she was exceedingly sallow.

very eyes—the deep, grey, watchful eyes of Napoleon; before night came, the coalition was a vain thing—meet for History, and the heart of its great author was crushed with grief, when the terrible tidings came to his ears. In the bitterness of his despair, he cried out to his niece, and bid her “ROLL UP THE MAP OF EUROPE;” there was a little more of suffering, and at last, with his swollen tongue still muttering something for England, he died by the noblest of all sorrows.

Lady Hester, meeting the calamity in her own fierce way, seems to have scorned the poor island that had not enough of God’s grace to keep the “heaven-sent” minister alive. I can hardly tell why it should be, but there is a longing for the East, very commonly felt by proud-hearted people, when goaded by sorrow. Lady Hester Stanhope obeyed this impulse: for some time, I believe, she was at Constantinople, where her magnificence, and near alliance to the late minister, gained her great influence. Afterwards she passed into Syria. The people of that country, excited by the achievements of Sir Sydney Smith, had begun to imagine the possibility of their land being occupied by the English, and many of them looked upon Lady Hester as a Princess who came to prepare the way for the expected conquest. I don’t know it from her own lips, or indeed from any certain authority, but I have been told that she began her connection with the Bedouins by making a large present of money (£500, it was said, immense in piastres) to the Sheik whose authority was recognized in that part of the Desert, which lies between Damascus and Palmyra. The prestige created by the rumors of her high and undefined rank, as well as of her wealth, and corresponding magnificence, was well sustained by her imperious character, and her dauntless bravery. Her influence increased. I never heard anything satisfactory as to the real extent or duration of her sway, but it seemed that, for a time at least, she certainly exercised something like sovereignty amongst the wandering tribes. And now that her earthly kingdom had passed away, she strove for spiritual power, and impiously dared, as it was said, to boast some mystic union with the very God of very God!

A couple of black slave girls came at a signal, and supplied

their mistress as well as myself, with lighted tchibouques, and coffee.

The custom of the East sanctions, and almost commands some moments of silence whilst you are inhaling the first few breaths of the fragrant pipe; the pause was broken, I think, by my Lady, who addressed to me some inquiries respecting my mother, and particularly as to her marriage; but before I had communicated any great amount of family facts, the spirit of the Prophetess kindled within her, and presently (though with all the skill of a woman of the world), she shuffled away the subject of poor dear Somersetshire, and bounded onward into loftier spheres of thought.

My old acquaintance with some of "the twelve," enabled me to bear my part (of course a very humble one), in a conversation relative to occult science. Milnes once spread a report, that every gang of gipsies was found upon inquiry to have come last from a place to the westward, and to be about to make the next move in an eastern direction; either therefore they were to be all gathered together towards the rising of the sun, by the mysterious finger of Providence, or else they were to revolve round the globe for ever, and ever, and ever; both of these suppositions were highly gratifying, because they were both marvellous, and though the story on which they were founded plainly sprung from the inventive brain of a poet, no one had ever been so odiously statistical as to attempt a contradiction of it. I now mentioned the story as a report to Lady Hester Stanhope, and asked her if it were true; I could not have touched upon any imaginable subject more deeply interesting to my hearer—more closely akin to her habitual train of thinking; she immediately threw off all the restraint belonging to an interview with a stranger; and when she had received a few more similar proofs of my aptness for the marvellous, she went so far as to say, that she would adopt me as her "élève" in occult science.

For hours, and hours, this wondrous white woman poured forth her speech, for the most part concerning sacred and profane mysteries; but every now and then, she would stay her lofty flight, and swoop down upon the world again; whenever this happened, I was interested in her conversation.

She adverted more than once to the period of her lost sway amongst the Arabs, and mentioned some of the circumstances which aided her in obtaining influence with the wandering tribes. The Bedouin, so often engaged in irregular warfare, strains his eyes to the horizon in search of a coming enemy just as habitually as the sailor keeps his "bright look out" for a strange sail. In the absence of telescopes, a far reaching sight is highly valued, and Lady Hester possessed this quality to an extraordinary degree. She told me that on one occasion, when there was good reason to expect a hostile attack, great excitement was felt in the camp by the report of a far-seeing Arab, who declared that he could just distinguish some moving objects upon the very furthest point within the reach of his eyes; Lady Hester was consulted, and she instantly assured her comrades in arms, that there were indeed a number of horses within sight, but that they were without riders; the assertion proved to be correct, and from that time forth, her superiority over all others in respect of far sight remained undisputed.

Lady Hester related to me this other anecdote of her Arab life; it was when the heroic qualities of the Englishwoman were just beginning to be felt amongst the people of the desert, that she was marching one day along with the forces of the tribe, to which she had allied herself. She perceived that preparations for an engagement were going on, and upon her making inquiry as to the cause, the Sheik at first affected mystery and concealment, but at last confessed that war had been declared against his tribe on account of its alliance with the English Princess, and that they were now unfortunately about to be attacked by a very superior force; he made it appear that Lady Hester was the sole cause of hostility betwixt his tribe and the impending enemy, and that his sacred duty of protecting the Englishwoman whom he had admitted as his guest, was the only obstacle which prevented an amicable arrangement of the dispute. The Sheik hinted that his tribe was likely to sustain an almost overwhelming blow, but at the same time declared, that no fear of the consequences, however terrible to him, and his whole people, should induce him to dream of abandoning his illustrious guest. The Heroïne instantly took her part; it was

not for her to be a source of danger to her friends, but rather to her enemies, so she resolved to turn away from the people, and trust for help to none, save only her haughty self. The Sheiks affected to dissuade her from so rash a course, and fairly told her that although they (having been freed from her presence) would be able to make good terms for themselves, yet that there were no means of allaying the hostility felt towards her, and that the whole face of the desert would be swept by the horsemen of her enemies so carefully, as to make her escape into other districts almost impossible. The brave woman was not to be moved by terrors of this kind, and bidding farewell to the tribe which had honored and protected her, she turned her horse's head, and rode straight away from them, without friend, or follower. Hours had elapsed, and for some time she had been alone in the centre of the round horizon, when her quick eye perceived some horsemen in the distance. The party came nearer, and nearer; soon it was plain that they were making towards her, and presently some hundreds of Bedouins, fully armed, galloped up to her, ferociously shouting, and apparently intending to take her life at the instant with their pointed spears. Her face at the time was covered with the yashmack according to the Eastern usage, but at the moment when the foremost of the horsemen had all but reached her with their spears, she stood up in her stirrups—withdrew the yashmack that veiled the terrors of her countenance—waved her arm slowly and disdainfully, and cried out with a loud voice, "Avaunt!"* The horsemen recoiled from her glance, but not in terror. The threatening yells of the assailants were suddenly changed for loud shouts of joy, and admiration, at the bravery of the stately English woman, and festive gun-shots were fired on all sides around her honored head. The truth was, that the party belonged to the tribe with which she had allied herself, and that the threatened attack, as well as the pretended apprehension of an engagement, had been contrived for the mere purpose of testing her courage. The day

* She spoke it, I dare say, in English; the words would not be the less effective for being spoken in an unknown tongue. Lady Hester, I believe, never learnt to speak the Arabic with a perfect accent.

ended in a great feast prepared to do honor to the heroine, and from that time her power over the minds of the people grew rapidly. Lady Hester related this story with great spirit, and I recollect that she put up her yashmack for a moment, in order to give me a better idea of the effect which she produced by suddenly revealing the awfulness of her countenance.

With respect to her then present mode of life, Lady Hester informed me, that for her sin, she had subjected herself during many years to severe penance, and that her self-denial had not been without its reward. "Vain and false," said she, "is all the pretended knowledge of the Europeans—their Doctors will tell you that the drinking of milk gives yellowness to the complexion; milk is my only food, and you see if my face be not white." Her abstinence from food intellectual, was carried as far as her physical fasting; she never, she said, looked upon a book nor a newspaper, but trusted alone to the stars for her sublime knowledge; she usually passed the nights in communing with these heavenly teachers, and lay at rest during the daytime. She spoke with great contempt of the frivolity, and benighted ignorance of the modern Europeans, and mentioned in proof of this, that they were not only untaught in astrology, but were unacquainted with the common and every day phenomena produced by magic art; she spoke as if she would make me understand that all sorcerous spells were completely at her command, but that the exercise of such powers would be derogatory to her high rank in the heavenly kingdom. She said, that the spell by which the face of an absent person is thrown upon a mirror, was within the reach of the humblest and most contemptible magicians, but that the practice of such like arts was unholy, as well as vulgar.

We spoke of the bending twig by which it is said that precious metals may be discovered. In relation to this, the Prophetess told me a story rather against herself, and inconsistent with the notion of her being perfect in her science, but I think that she mentioned the facts as having happened before the time at which she attained to the great spiritual authority which she now arrogated; she told me that vast treasures were known to exist in a situation which she mentioned, if I rightly remember,

as being near Suez : that Napoleon, profanely brave, thrust his arm into the cave, containing the coveted gold, and that instantly his flesh became palsied, but the youthful hero (for she said he was great in his generation) was not to be thus daunted ; he fell back characteristically upon his brazen resources, and ordered up his artillery ; but man could not strive with demons, and Napoleon was foiled. In years after came Ibrahim Pasha, with heavy guns, and wicked spells to-boot, but the infernal guardians of the treasure were too strong for him. It was after this that Lady Hester passed by the spot, and she described, with animated gesture, the force and energy with which the divining twig had suddenly leaped in her hands ; she ordered excavations, and no demons opposed her enterprise ; the vast chest in which the treasure had been deposited was at length discovered, but lo ! and behold, it was full of pebbles ! She said, however, that the times were approaching, in which the hidden treasures of the earth would become available to those who had true knowledge.

Speaking of Ibrahim Pasha, Lady Hester said, that he was a bold, bad man, and was possessed of some of those common and wicked magical arts upon which she looked down with so much contempt ; she said, for instance, that Ibrahim's life was charmed against balls and steel, and that after a battle, he loosened the folds of his shawl, and shook out the bullets like dust.

It seems that the St. Simonians once made overtures to Lady Hester ; she told me that the Peer Enfantin (the chief of the sect) had sent her a service of plate, but that she had declined to receive it ; she delivered a prediction as to the probability of the St. Simonians finding the "mystic mother," and this she did in a way which would amuse you ; unfortunately, I am not at liberty to mention this part of the woman's prophecies ; why, I cannot tell, but so it is, that she bound me to eternal secrecy.

Lady Hester told me, that since her residence at Djoun, she had been attacked by a terrible illness, which rendered her for a long time perfectly helpless ; all her attendants fled, and left her to perish. Whilst she lay thus alone, and quite unable to rise, robbers came, and carried away her property ;* she told me,

* The proceedings thus described to me by Lady Hester, as having taken

that they actually unroofed a great part of the building, and employed engines with pulleys for the purpose of hoisting out such of her valuables as were too bulky to pass through doors. It would seem that, before this catastrophe, Lady Hester had been rich in the possession of Eastern luxuries, for she told me that when the chiefs of the Ottoman force took refuge with her after the fall of Acre, they brought their wives also in great numbers; to all of these Lady Hester, as she said, presented magnificent dresses, but her generosity occasioned strife only instead of gratitude, for every woman who fancied her present less splendid than that of another, with equal or less pretension, became absolutely furious; all these audacious guests had now been got rid of, but the Albanian soldiers who had taken refuge with Lady Hester at the same time, still remained under her protection.

In truth, this half-ruined convent, guarded by the proud heart

place during her illness, were afterwards re-enacted at the time of her death. Since I wrote the words to which this note is appended, I received, from an English traveller, this interesting account of the heroine's death, or rather of the circumstances attending the discovery of the event; the letter is dated Djoun (Lady Hester's late residence) and contains the following passages:—"I reached this strange hermitage last night, and though time and some naval officers are urging my departure, I am too glad to find myself in a place whereof we have often discoursed, to allow the opportunity of writing to you to pass by. How beautiful must this convent-palace have been when you saw it, its strange mistress doing its hospitalities and exercising her self-won regal power! A friend of — has a letter from the Sultan to her, beginning 'Cousin.' She annihilated a village for disobedience, and burned a mountain chalet with all its inhabitants, for the murder of a traveller. * * * She held on gallantly to the last. Moore, our Consul at Beyroot, heard she was ill, and rode over the mountains accompanied by a missionary, to visit her. A profound silence was over all the palace—no one met them—they lighted their own lamps in the outer court, and passed unquestioned through court and gallery, till they came to where *she* lay: a corpse was the only inhabitant of Djoun, and the isolation from her kind which she so long sought, was indeed completed. That morning thirty-seven servants had watched every motion of her eye; that spell once darkened by death, every one fled with the plunder; not a single thing was left in the room where she lay dead, except upon her person; no one had ventured to touch that, and even in death she seemed able to protect herself. At midnight the missionary carried her out to a favorite resort of hers in the garden, and there they buried her. * * * The buildings are fast falling into decay."

of an English gentlewoman, was the only spot throughout all Syria and Palestine in which the will of Mehemet Ali and his fierce Lieutenant was not the law. More than once had the Pasha of Egypt commanded that Ibrahim should have the Albanians delivered up to him, but this white woman of the mountain (grown classical, not by books, but by very pride) answered only with a disdainful invitation to "come and take them." Whether it was that Ibrahim was acted upon by any superstitious dread of interfering with the Prophetess (a notion not at all incompatible with his character as an able Oriental commander), or that he feared the ridicule of putting himself in collision with a gentlewoman, he certainly never ventured to attack the sanctuary, and so long as the Chatham's grand-daughter breathed a breath of life, there was always this one hillock, and that, too, in the midst of a most populous district, which stood out and kept its freedom. Mehemet Ali used to say, I am told, that the English woman had given him more trouble than all the insurgent people of Syria and Palestine.

The Prophetess announced to me that we were upon the eve of a stupendous convulsion, which would destroy the then recognized value of all property upon earth, and declaring that those only who should be in the East at the time of the great change, could hope for greatness in the new life that was now close at hand, she advised me, whilst there was yet time, to dispose of my property in fragile England, and gain a station in Asia; she told me that, after leaving her, I should go into Egypt, but that in a little while I should return into Syria. I secretly smiled at this last prophecy as a "bad-shot," for I had fully determined, after visiting the pyramids, to take ship from Alexandria for Greece. But men struggle vainly in the meshes of their destiny; the unbelieved Cassandra was right after all; the Plague came, and the necessity of avoiding the Quarantine to which I should have been subjected, if I had sailed from Alexandria, forced me to alter my route: I went down into Egypt, and stayed there for a time, and then crossed the Desert once more, and came back to the mountains of the Lebanon exactly as the Prophetess had foretold.

Lady Hester talked to me long and earnestly on the subject of

Religion, announcing that the Messiah was yet to come ; she strived to impress me with the vanity and the falseness of all European creeds, as well as with a sense of her own spiritual greatness : throughout her conversation upon these high topics, she skilfully insinuated, without actually asserting, her heavenly rank.

Amongst other much more marvellous powers, the Lady claimed to have one which most women I fancy possess, namely, that of reading men's characters in their faces ; she examined the line of my features very attentively, and told me the result, which, however, I mean to keep hidden.

One great subject of discourse was that of "race," upon which she was very diffuse, and yet rather mysterious ; she set great value upon the ancient French (not Norman blood, for that she vilified), but did not at all appreciate that which we call in this country an "old family."* She had a vast idea of the Cornish miners, on account of their race, and said, if she chose, she could give me the means of rousing them to the most tremendous enthusiasm.

Such are the topics on which the Lady mainly conversed, but very often she would descend to more worldly chat, and then she was no longer the prophetess, but the sort of woman that you sometimes see, I am told, in London drawing-rooms,—cool—unsparing of enemies—full of audacious fun, and saying the downright things that the sheepish society around her is afraid to utter. I am told that Lady Hester was in her youth a capital mimic, and she showed me that not all the queenly dullness to which she had condemned herself,—not all her fasting, and solitude, had destroyed this terrible power. The first whom she crucified in my presence, was poor Lord Byron ; she had seen him, it appeared, I know not where, soon after his arrival in the East, and was vastly amused at his little affectations ; he had picked up a few sentences of the Romaic, with which he affected to give orders to his Greek servant ; I can't tell whether

* In a letter which I afterwards received from Lady Hester, she mentioned incidentally Lord Hardwicke, and said that he was "the kindest-hearted man existing—a most manly, firm character. He comes from a good breed,—all the Yorkes excellent, with *ancient* French blood in their veins."

Lady Hester's mimicry of the bard was at all close, but it was amusing; she attributed to him a curiously coxcombical lisp.

Another person whose style of speaking the Lady took off very amusingly was one who would scarcely object to suffer by the side of Lord Byron,—I mean Lamartine, who had visited her in the course of his travels; the peculiarity which attracted her ridicule was an over-refinement of manner: according to my Lady's imitation of Lamartine (I have never seen him myself), he had none of the violent grimace of his countrymen, and not even their usual way of talking, but rather bore himself mincingly, like the humbler sort of English Dandy.*

Lady Hester seems to have heartily despised everything approaching to exquisiteness; she told me, by the by (and her opinion upon that subject is worth having), that a downright manner, amounting even to brusqueness, is more effective than any other with the Oriental; and that amongst the English, of all ranks, and all classes, there is no man so attractive to the Orientals—no man who can negotiate with them half so effectively, as a good, honest, open-hearted, and positive naval officer of the old school.

I have told you, I think, that Lady Hester could deal fiercely with those she hated; one man above all others (he is now uprooted from society, and cast away for ever) she blasted with her wrath; you would have thought that in the scornfulness of her nature, she must have sprung upon her foe with more of fierceness than of skill, but this was not so, for with all the force and vehemence of her invective, she displayed a sober, patient and minute attention to the details of vituperation, which contributed to its success a thousand times more than mere violence.

* It is said that deaf people can hear what is said concerning themselves, and it would seem that those who live without books, or newspapers, know all that is written about them. Lady Hester Stanhope, though not admitting a book or newspaper into her fortress, seems to have known the way in which M. Lamartine mentioned her in his book, for in a letter which she wrote to me after my return to England, she says, "although neglected, as Monsieur Le M." (referring as I believe to M. Lamartine) "describes, and without books, yet my head is organized to supply the want of them, as well as acquired knowledge."

During the hours that this sort of conversation or rather discourse was going on, our *tehibouques* were from time to time replenished, and the Lady as well as I, continued to smoke with little or no intermission, till the interview ended. I think that the fragrant fumes of *Latakiah* must have helped to keep me on my good behavior as a patient disciple of the Prophetess.

It was not till after midnight that my visit for the evening came to an end; when I quitted my seat the Lady rose, and stood up in the same formal attitude (almost that of a soldier in a state of "attention,") which she had assumed at my entrance, at the same time she let go the drapery which she had held over her lap whilst sitting, and allowed it to fall on the ground.

The next morning after breakfast I was visited by my Lady's Secretary—the only European, except the Doctor, whom she retained in her household. This Secretary, like the Doctor, was Italian, but he preserved more signs of European dress and European pretensions, than his medical fellow-slave. He spoke little or no English, though he wrote it pretty well, having been formerly employed in a mercantile house connected with England. The poor fellow was in an unhappy state of mind. In order to make you understand the extent of his spiritual anxieties, I ought to have told you that the Doctor (who had sunk into the complete Asiatic, and had condescended accordingly to the performance of even menial services) had adopted the common faith of all the neighboring people, and had become a firm and happy believer in the divine power of his mistress. Not so the Secretary; when I had strolled with him to a distance from the building, which rendered him safe from being overheard by human ears, he told me in a hollow voice, trembling with emotion, that there were times at which he doubted the divinity of "*Milèdi*." I said nothing to encourage the poor fellow in that frightful state of scepticism, which, if indulged, might end in positive infidelity. I found that her Ladyship had rather arbitrarily abridged the amusements of her Secretary, forbidding him from shooting small birds on the mountain side. This oppression had roused in him a spirit of inquiry that might end fatally—perhaps for himself—perhaps for the "religion of the place."

The Secretary told me that his Mistress was greatly disliked by the surrounding people whom she oppressed by her exactions, and the truth of this statement was borne out by the way in which my Lady spoke to me of her neighbors. But in Eastern countries, hate and veneration are very commonly felt for the same object, and the general belief in the superhuman power of this wonderful white lady—her resolute and imperious character, and above all, perhaps, her fierce Albanians (not backward to obey an order for the sacking of a village) inspired sincere respect amongst the surrounding inhabitants. Now the being “respected” amongst Orientals, is not an empty, or merely honorary distinction, for, on the contrary, it carries with it a clear right to take your neighbor’s corn, his cattle, his eggs, and his honey, and almost anything that is his, except his wives. This law was acted upon by the Princess of Djoun, and her establishment was supplied by contributions apportioned amongst the nearest of the villages.

I understood that the Albanians (restrained, I suppose, by their dread of being delivered up to Ibrahim) had not given any very troublesome proofs of their unruly natures. The Secretary told me that their rations, including a small allowance of coffee and tobacco, were served out to them with tolerable regularity.

I asked the Secretary, how Lady Hester was off for horses, and said that I would take a look at the stable; the man did not raise any opposition to my proposal, and affected no mystery about the matter, but said that the only two steeds which then belonged to her Ladyship were of a very humble sort; this answer, and a storm of rain which began to descend, prevented me at the time from undertaking my journey to the stable, which was at some distance from the part of the building in which I was quartered, and I don’t know that I ever thought of the matter afterwards, until my return to England, when I saw Lamartine’s eye-witnessing account of the horse saddled by the hands of his Maker!

When I returned to my apartment (which, as my hostess told me, was the only one in the whole building that kept out the rain)

her Ladyship sent to say that she would be glad to receive me again ; I was rather surprised at this, for I had understood that she reposed during the day, and it was now little later than noon. "Really," said she, when I had taken my seat and my pipe, "we were together for hours last night, and still I have heard nothing at all of my old friends ; now *do* tell me something of your dear mother and her sister ; I never knew your father—it was after I left Burton Pynsent that your mother married." I began to make slow answer, but my questioner soon went off again to topics more sublime, so that this second interview, which lasted two or three hours, was occupied with the same sort of varied discourse as that which I have been describing.

In the course of the afternoon the captain of an English man-of-war arrived at Djoun, and her Ladyship determined to receive him for the same reason as that which had induced her to allow my visit—namely, an early intimacy with his family. I, and the new visitor, who was a pleasant, amusing person, dined together, and we were afterwards invited to the presence of my Lady, with whom we sat smoking and talking till midnight. The conversation turned chiefly, I think, upon magical science. I had determined to be off at an early hour the next morning, and so at the end of this interview I bade my Lady farewell. With her parting words she once more advised me to abandon Europe, and seek my reward in the East, and she urged me, too, to give the like counsels to my father, and tell him that "*She had said it.*"

Lady Hester's unholy claim to supremacy in the spiritual kingdom was, no doubt, the suggestion of fierce and inordinate pride, most perilously akin to madness, but I am quite sure that the mind of the woman was too strong to be thoroughly overcome by even this potent feeling. I plainly saw that she was not an unhesitating follower of her own system, and I even fancied that I could distinguish the brief moments during which she contrived to believe in Herself, from those long and less happy intervals in which her own reason was too strong for her.

As for the Lady's faith in Astrology, and Magic science, you are not for a moment to suppose that this implied any aberration

of intellect. She believed these things in common with those around her, for she seldom spoke to anybody, except crazy old dervishes, who received her alms, and fostered her extravagances, and even when (as on the occasion of my visit) she was brought into contact with a person entertaining different notions, she still remained uncontradicted. This entourage, and the habit of fasting from books and newspapers, were quite enough to make her a facile recipient of any marvellous story.

I think that in England we are scarcely sufficiently conscious of the great debt we owe to the wise and watchful press which presides over the formation of our opinions, and which brings about this splendid result, namely, that in matters of belief the humblest of us are lifted up to the level of the most sagacious, so that really a simple Cornet in the Blues is no more likely to entertain a foolish belief about ghosts or witchcraft, or any other supernatural topic, than the Lord High Chancellor or the Leader of the House of Commons. How different is the intellectual regime of Eastern countries! In Syria, and Palestine, and Egypt, you might as well dispute the efficacy of grass or grain as of Magic. There is no controversy about the matter. The effect of this, the unanimous belief of an ignorant people upon the mind of a stranger, is extremely curious, and well worth noticing. A man coming freshly from Europe is at first proof against the nonsense with which he is assailed, but often it happens that after a little while the social atmosphere in which he lives will begin to infect him, and if he has been unaccustomed to the cunning of fence by which Reason prepares the means of guarding herself against fallacy, he will yield himself at last to the faith of those around him, and this he will do by sympathy, it would seem, rather than from conviction. I have been much interested in observing that the mere "practical man," however skilful and shrewd in his own way, has not the kind of power which enables him to resist the gradual impression which is made upon his mind by the common opinion of those whom he sees and hears from day to day. Even amongst the English (whose good sense and sound religious knowledge would be likely to guard them from error), I have known the calculating merchant, the inquisitive traveller, and the post-captain, with his

bright, wakeful eye of command—I have known all these surrender themselves to the *really* magic-like influence of other people's minds ; their language at first is, that they are “ staggered ; ” leading you by that expression to suppose that they had been witnesses to some phenomenon, which it was very difficult to account for otherwise than by supernatural causes, but when I have questioned further, I have always found that these “ staggering ” wonders were not even specious enough to be looked upon as good “ tricks.” A man in England, who gained his whole livelihood as a conjuror, would soon be starved to death if he could perform no better miracles than those which are wrought with so much effect in Syria and Egypt ; *sometimes*, no doubt, a magician will make a good hit (Sir Robert once said a “ good thing ”), but all such successes range, of course, under the head of mere “ tentative miracles,” as distinguished by the strong-brained Paley.

CHAPTER IX.

The Sanctuary.

I CROSSED the plain of Esdraelon, and entered amongst the hills of beautiful Galilee. It was at sunset that my path brought me sharply round into the gorge of a little valley, and close upon a grey mass of dwellings that lay happily nestled in the lap of the mountain. There was one only shining point still touched with the light of the sun, who had set for all besides; a brave sign this to "holy" Shereef, and the rest of my Moslem men, for the one glittering summit was the head of a minaret, and the rest of the seeming village that had veiled itself so meekly under the shades of evening was Christian Nazareth!

Within the precincts of the Latin convent in which I was quartered, there stands the great Catholic church which encloses the Sanctuary—the dwelling of the blessed Virgin.* This is a

* The Greek Church does not recognize this as the true Sanctuary, and many Protestants look upon all the traditions, by which it is attempted to ascertain the holy places of Palestine, as utterly fabulous. For myself, I do not mean either to affirm or deny the correctness of the opinion which has fixed upon this as the true site, but merely to mention it as a belief entertained, without question, by my brethren of the Latin church, whose guest I was at the time. It would be a great aggravation of the trouble of writing about these matters, if I were to stop in the midst of every sentence for the purpose of saying "so-called" or "so it is said," and would besides sound very ungraciously; yet I am anxious to be literally true in all I write. Now, thus it is that I mean to get over my difficulty. Whenever in this great bundle of papers, or book (if book it is to be), you see any words about matters of religion which would seem to involve the assertion of my own opinion, you are to understand me, just as if one or other of the qualifying phrases above mentioned, had been actually inserted in every sentence. My general direction for you to construe me thus, will render all that I write as strictly and accurately true, as if I had every time lugged in a formal declaration of the fact, that I was merely expressing the notions of other people.

grotto of about ten feet either way, forming a little chapel or recess, to which you descend by steps. It is decorated with splendor: on the left hand a column of granite hangs from the top of the grotto, to within a few feet of the ground; immediately beneath it is another column of the same size, which rises from the ground as if to meet the one above; but between this and the suspended pillar, there is an interval of more than a foot; these fragments once formed a single column, against which the angel leant, when he spoke, and told to Mary the mystery of her awful blessedness. Hard by, near the altar, the holy Virgin was kneeling.

I had been journeying (cheerily indeed, for the voices of my followers were ever within my hearing, but yet) as it were, in solitude, for I had no comrade to whet the edge of my reason, or wake me from my noon-day dreams. I was left all alone to be taught and swayed by the beautiful circumstances of Palestine travelling—by the clime, and the land, and the name of the land with all its mighty import—by the glittering freshness of the sward, and the abounding masses of flowers that furnished my sumptuous pathway—by the bracing and fragrant air, that seemed to poise me in my saddle, and to lift me along like a planet appointed to glide through space.

And the end of my journey was Nazareth—the home of the Blessed Virgin! In the first dawn of my manhood, the old painters of Italy had taught me their dangerous worship of the beauty that is more than mortal, but those images all seemed shadowy now, and floated before me so dimly, the one overcasting the other, that they left me no one sweet idol on which I could look, and look again, and say, “*Maria mia!*” Yet they left me more than an idol—they left me (for to them I am wont to trace it) a faint apprehension of Beauty not compassed with lines and shadows—they touched me (forgive, proud Marie of Anjou!) they touched me with a faith in loveliness transcending mortal shapes.

I came to Nazareth, and was led from the convent to the Sanctuary. Long fasting will sometimes heat my brain, and draw me away out of the world—will disturb my judgment, confuse my notions of right and wrong, and weaken my power

of choosing the right ; I had fasted perhaps too long, for I was fevered with the zeal of an insane devotion to the Heavenly Queen of Christendom. But I knew the feebleness of this gentle malady, and I knew how easily my watchful reason, if ever so slightly provoked, would drag me back to life ; let there but come one chilling breath of the outer world, and all this loving piety would cower, and fly before the sound of my own bitter laugh. And so as I went, I trod tenderly, not looking to the right, nor to the left, but bending my eyes to the ground.

The attending friar served me well—he led me down quietly, and all but silently to the Virgin’s home. The mystic air was so burnt with the consuming flames of the altar, and so laden with incense, that my chest labored strongly, and heaved with luscious pain. There—there with beating heart the Virgin knelt, and listened ! I strived to grasp and hold with my riveted eyes some one of the feigned Madonnas, but of all the heaven-lit faces imagined by men, there was none that would abide with me in this the very Sanctuary. Impatient of vacancy, I grew madly strong against Nature, and if by some awful spell—some impious rite, I could——Oh ! most sweet Religion that bid me fear God, and be pious, and yet not cease from loving ! Religion and gracious Custom commanded me that I fall down loyally, and kiss the rock that blessed Mary pressed. With a half consciousness—with the semblance of a thrilling hope that I was plunging deep, deep into my first knowledge of some most holy mystery, or of some new, rapturous, and daring sin, I knelt, and bowed down my face till I met the smooth rock with my lips. One moment—one moment—my heart, or some old Pagan demon within me woke up, and fiercely bounded—my bosom was lifted, and swung—as though I had touched Her warm robe. One moment—one more, and then—the fever had left me. I rose from my knees. I felt hopelessly sane. The mere world re-appeared. My good old Monk was there, dangling his key with listless patience, and as he guided me from the Church, and talked of the Refectory, and the coming repast, I listened to his words with some attention and pleasure.

CHAPTER X.

The Monks of the Holy Land.

WHENEVER you come back to me from Palestine, we will find some "golden wine,"* of Lebanon, that we may celebrate with apt libations the monks of the Holy Land, and, though the poor fellows be theoretically "dead to the world," we will drink to every man of them a good, long life, and a merry one! Graceless is the traveller who forgets his obligations to these saints upon earth—little love has he for merry Christendom, if he has not rejoiced with great joy to find in the very midst of water-drinking infidels, those lowly monasteries, in which the blessed juice of the grape is quaffed in peace. Ay! Ay! We will fill our glasses till they look like cups of amber, and drink profoundly to our gracious hosts in Palestine.

You would be likely enough to fancy that these monastics are men who have retired to the sacred sites of Palestine, from an enthusiastic longing to devote themselves to the exercise of religion in the midst of the very land on which its first seeds were cast, and this is partially, at least, the case with the monks of the Greek Church, but it is not with enthusiasts that the Catholic establishments are filled. The monks of the Latin convents are chiefly persons of the peasant class, from Italy and Spain, who have been handed over to these remote asylums, by order of their ecclesiastical superiors, and can no more account for their being in the Holy Land, than men of marching regiments can explain why they are in "stupid quarters." I believe that these monks are for the most part well conducted men,—punctual in their ceremonial duties, and altogether humble-minded Christians; their humility is not at all misplaced, for you see at a glance (poor fellows) that they belong to the "lag remove" of the hu-

* "Vino d'oro."

man race ; if the taking of the cowl does not imply a complete renouncement of the world, it is at least (in these days) a bonâ fide farewell to every kind of useful and entertaining knowledge, and accordingly, the low bestial brow, and the animal caste of those almost Bourbon features, show plainly enough that all the intellectual vanities of life have been really and truly abandoned. But it is hard to quench altogether the spirit of Inquiry that stirs in the human breast, and accordingly these monks inquire,—they are *always* inquiring,—inquiring for “news!” Poor fellows! they could scarcely have yielded themselves to the sway of any passion more difficult of gratification, for they have no means of communicating with the journalized world, except through European travellers ; and these in consequence, I suppose, of that restlessness and irritability which generally haunt their wanderings, seem to have always avoided the bore of giving any information to their hosts ; as for me, I am more patient and good-natured, and when I found that the kind monks who gathered round me at Nazareth were longing to know the real truth about the General Bonaparte, who had recoiled from the siege of Acre, I softened my heart down to the good humor of Herodotus, and calmly began to “sing History,” telling my eager hearers of the French Empire, and the greatness of its glory, and of Waterloo, and the fall of Napoleon ! Now my story of this marvellous ignorance on the part of the poor monks is one upon which (though depending on my own testimony) I look “with considerable suspicion ;” it is quite true (how silly it would be to *invent* anything so witless !) and yet I think I could satisfy the mind of a “reasonable man,” that it is false. Many of the older monks must have been in Europe at a time when the Italy and the Spain from which they came, were in act of taking their French lessons, or had parted so lately with their teachers, that not to know of “the Emperor,” was impossible, and these men could scarcely, therefore, have failed to bring with them some tidings of Napoleon’s career. Yet I say that that which I have written is true,—the one who believes because I have said it, will be right—(she always is), while poor Mr. “reasonable man,” who is convinced by the weight of my argument, will be completely deceived.

In Spanish politics, however, the monks are better instructed ; the revenues of the monasteries, which had been principally supplied by the bounty of their most Catholic Majesties, have been withheld since Ferdinand's death, and the interests of these establishments being thus closely involved in the destinies of Spain, it is not wonderful that the brethren should be a little more knowing in Spanish affairs, than in other branches of history. Besides, a large proportion of the monks were natives of the Peninsula ; to these, I remember, Mysseri's familiarity with the Spanish language and character was a source of immense delight ; they were always gathering around him, and it seemed to me that they treasured like gold the few Castilian words which he deigned to spare them.

Christianity permits, and sanctions the drinking of wine, and of all the holy brethren of Palestine, there are none who hold fast to this gladsome rite so strenuously as the monks of Damascus ; not that they are more zealous Christians than the rest of their fellows in the Holy Land, but that they have better wine. Whilst I was at Damascus, I had my quarters at the Franciscan convent there, and very soon after my arrival I asked one of the monks to let me know something of the spots which deserved to be seen ; I made my inquiry in reference to the associations with which the city had been hallowed by the sojourn and adventures of St. Paul. "There is nothing in all Damascus," said the good man, "half so well worth seeing as our cellars," and forthwith he invited me to go, see, and admire the long ranges of liquid treasure which he and his brethren had laid up for themselves on earth. And these, I soon found, were not as the treasures of the miser that lie in unprofitable disuse, for day by day, and hour by hour, the golden juice ascended from the dark recesses of the cellar to the uppermost brains of the monks ; dear old fellows ! in the midst of that solemn land, their Christian laughter rang loudly and merrily—their eyes flashed with unceasing bonfires, and their heavy woollen petticoats could no more weigh down the springiness of their paces, than the nominal gauze of a danseuse can clog her bounding step.

The monks do a world of good in their way and there can be no doubting that previously to the arrival of Bishop Alexander,

with his numerous young family, and his pretty English nurse-maids, they were the chief Propagandists of Christianity in Palestine. My old friends of the Franciscan convent at Jerusalem, some time since, gave proof of their goodness by delivering themselves up to the peril of death for the sake of Duty. When I was their guest, they were forty, I believe, in number, and I don't recollect that there was one of them whom I should have looked upon as a desirable life-holder of any property to which I might be entitled in expectancy. Yet these forty were reduced in a few days to nineteen ; the Plague was the messenger that summoned them to a taste of real death, but the circumstances under which they perished are rather curious, and though I have no authority for the story except an Italian newspaper, I harbor no doubt of its truth, for the facts were detailed with minuteness, and strictly corresponded with all that I knew of the poor fellows to whom they related.

It was about three months after the time of my leaving Jerusalem, that the Plague set his spotted foot on the Holy City. The monks felt great alarm ; they did not shrink from their duty, but for its performance they chose a plan most sadly well fitted for bringing down upon them the very death which they were striving to ward off. They imagined themselves almost safe, so long as they remained within their walls ; but then it was quite needful that the Catholic Christians of the place, who had always looked to the convent for the supply of their spiritual wants, should receive the aids of religion in the hour of death. A single monk, therefore, was chosen either by lot, or by some other fair appeal to Destiny ; being thus singled out, he was to go forth into the plague-stricken city, and to perform with exactness his priestly duties ; then he was to return, not to the interior of the Convent, for fear of infecting his brethren, but to a detached building (which I remember) belonging to the establishment, but at some little distance from the inhabited rooms ; he was provided with a bell, and at a certain hour in the morning he was ordered to ring it, *if he could* ; but if no sound was heard at the appointed time, then knew his brethren that he was either delirious, or dead, and another martyr was sent forth to take his place. In this way twenty-one of the monks were carried off.

One cannot well fail to admire the steadiness with which the dismal scheme was carried through ; but if there be any truth in the notion, that disease may be invited by a frightening imagination, it is difficult to conceive a more dangerous plan than that which was chosen by these poor fellows. The anxiety with which they must have expected each day the sound of the bell—the silence that reigned instead of it, and then the drawing of the lots (the odds against death being one point lower than yesterday) and the going forth of the newly doomed man—all this must have widened the gulf that opens to the shades below ; when his victim had already suffered so much of mental torture, it was but easy work for big, bullying Pestilence to follow a forlorn monk from the beds of the dying, and wrench away his life from him, as he lay all alone in an outhouse.

In most, I believe in all of the Holy Land convents, there are two personages so strangely raised above their brethren in all that dignifies humanity, that their bearing the same habit—their dwelling under the same roof—their worshipping the same God (consistent as all this is with the spirit of their religion), yet strikes the mind with a sense of wondrous incongruity ; the men I speak of are the “Padre Superiore,” and the “Padre Missionario.” The former is the supreme and absolute governor of the establishment, over which he is appointed to rule ; the latter is entrusted with the more active of the spiritual duties which attach to the Pilgrim Church. He is the shepherd of the good Catholic flock whose pasture is prepared in the midst of Mussulmans and schismatics—he keeps the light of the true faith ever vividly before their eyes—reproves their vices—supports them in their good resolves—consoles them in their afflictions, and teaches them to hate the Greek church. Such are his labors, and you may conceive that great tact must be needed for conducting with success the spiritual interests of the church under circumstances so odd as those which surround it in Palestine.

But the position of the Padre Superiore is still more delicate ; he is almost unceasingly in treaty with the powers that be, and the worldly prosperity of the establishment over which he presides, is in great measure dependent upon the extent of diplomatic skill which he can employ in its favor. I know not from

what class of churchmen these personages are chosen, for there is a mystery attending their origin, and the circumstance of their being stationed in these convents, which Rome does not suffer to be penetrated : I have heard it said that they are men of great note, and perhaps, of too high ambition in the Catholic Hierarchy, who, having fallen under the grave censure of the Church, are banished for fixed periods to these distant monasteries. I believe that the term during which they are condemned to remain in the Holy Land, is from eight to twelve years. By the natives of the country, as well as by the rest of the brethren, they are looked upon as superior beings ; and rightly too, for nature seems to have crowned them in her own true way.

The chief of the Jerusalem convent was a noble creature ; his worldly and spiritual authority seemed to have surrounded him, as it were, with a kind of "Court," and the manly gracefulness of his bearing did honor to the throne which he filled. There were no lords of the bedchamber, and no gold sticks and stones in waiting, yet everybody who approached him looked as though he were being "presented"—every interview which he granted wore the air of an "audience ;" the brethren, as often as they came near, bowed low, and kissed his hand, and if he went out, the Catholics of the place that hovered about the convent, would crowd around him with devout affection, and almost scramble for the blessing which his touch could give. He bore his honors all serenely, as though calmly conscious of his power to "bind and to loose."

CHAPTER XI.

From Nazareth to Tiberias.

NEITHER old "Sacred"* himself, nor any of his helpers, knew the road which I meant to take from Nazareth to the Sea of Galilee, and from thence to Jerusalem, so I was forced to add another to my party, by hiring a guide. The associations of Nazareth, as well as my kind feeling towards the hospitable monks, whose guest I had been, inclined me to set at naught the advice which I had received against employing Christians. I accordingly engaged a lithe, active young Nazarene, who was recommended to me by the monks, and who affected to be familiar with the line of country through which I intended to pass. My disregard of the popular prejudice against Christians was not justified in this particular instance, by the result of my choice. This you will see by and by.

I passed by Cana, and the house in which the water had been turned into wine—I came to the field in which our Saviour had rebuked the Scotch Sabbath-keepers of that period, by suffering his disciples to pluck corn on the Lord's day ; I rode over the ground on which the fainting multitude had been fed, and they showed me some massive fragments—the relics, they said, of that wondrous banquet, now turned into stone. The petrification was most complete.

I ascended the height on which our Lord was standing when he wrought the miracle. The hill was lofty enough to show me the fairness of the land on all sides, but I have an ancient love for the mere features of a lake, and so forgetting all else when I reached the summit, I looked away eagerly to the Eastward. There she lay, the Sea of Galilee. Less stern than Wastwater

* Shereef.

—less fair than gentle Windermere, she had still the winning ways of an English lake ; she caught from the smiling heavens unceasing light, and changeful phases of beauty, and with all this brightness on her face, she yet clung so fondly to the dull he-looking mountain at her side as though she would

“ Soothe him with her finer fancies,
Touch him with her lighter thought.”*

If one might judge of men’s real thoughts by their writings, it would seem that there are people who can visit an interesting locality, and follow up continuously the exact train of thought which ought to be suggested by the historical associations of the place. A person of this sort can go to Athens, and think of nothing later than the age of Pericles—can live with the Scipios as long as he stays in Rome—can go up in a balloon, and think how resplendently in former times the now vacant and desolate air was peopled with angels—how prettily it was crossed at intervals by the rounds of Jacob’s ladder ! I don’t possess this power at all : it is only by snatches, and for few moments together, that I can really associate a place with its proper history.

“ There at Tiberias, and along this western shore towards the North, and upon the bosom too of the lake, our Saviour and his disciples——” away flew those recollections, and my mind strained Eastward, because that that farthest shore was the end of the world that belongs to man the dweller—the beginning of the other and veiled world that is held by the strange race, whose life (like the pastime of Satan) is a “ going to and fro upon the face of the earth.” From those grey hills right away to the gates of Bagdad stretched forth the mysterious “ Desert ”—not a pale, void, sandy tract, but a land abounding in rich pastures—a land without cities or towns, without any “ respectable ” people, or any “ respectable things,” yet yielding its eighty thousand cavalry to the beck of a few old men. But once more—“ Tiberias—the plain of Gennesareth—the very earth on which I stood—that the deep, low tones of the Saviour’s voice should have gone forth into Eternity from out of the midst of

* Tennyson.

these hills, and these valleys !"—Ay, Ay, but yet again the calm face of the Lake was uplifted, and smiled upon my eyes with such familiar gaze, that the "deep low tones" were hushed—the listening multitudes all passed away, and instead there came to me a dear old memory from over the seas in England—a memory sweeter than the veriest Gospel to that poor, wilful mortal, me.

I went to Tiberias, and soon got afloat upon the water. In the evening I took up my quarters in the Catholic Church, and, the building being large enough, the whole of my party were admitted to the benefit of the same shelter. With portmanteaus, and carpet bags, and books, and maps, and fragrant tea, Mysери soon made me a home on the southern side of the church. One of old Shereef's helpers was an enthusiastic Catholic, and was greatly delighted at having so sacred a lodging. He lit up the altar with a number of tapers, and when his preparations were complete, he began to perform his orisons in the strangest manner imaginable ; his lips muttered the prayers of the Latin Church, but he bowed himself down, and laid his forehead to the stones beneath him, after the manner of a Mussulman. The universal aptness of a religious system for all stages of civilisation, and for all sorts and conditions of men, well befits its claim of divine origin. She is of all nations, and of all times, that wonderful Church of Rome !

Tiberias is one of the four holy cities,* according to the Talmud, and it is from this place or the immediate neighborhood of it, that the Messiah is to arise.

Except at Jerusalem, never think of attempting to sleep in a "holy city." Old Jews from all parts of the world go to lay their bones upon the sacred soil, and as these people never return to their homes, it follows that any domestic vermin which they may bring with them are likely to become permanently resident, so that the population is continually increasing. No recent census had been taken when I was at Tiberias, but I know that the congregation of fleas which attended at my church

* The other three cities held holy by Jews are Jersualem, Hebron, and Safet.

alone, must have been something enormous. It was a carnal, self-seeking congregation, wholly inattentive to the service which was going on, and devoted to the one object of having my blood. The fleas of all nations were there. The smug, steady, importunate flea from Holywell street—the pert, jumping “puce” from hungry France—the wary, watchful “pulce” with his poisoned stiletto—the vengeful “pulga” of Castile with his ugly knife—the German “floh” with his knife and fork—insatiate—not rising from table—whole swarms from all the Russias, and Asiatic hordes unnumbered—all these were there, and all rejoiced in one great international feast. I could no more defend myself against my enemies, than if I had been “pain à discretion” in the hands of a French patriot, or English gold in the claws of a Pennsylvanian Quaker. After passing a night like this, you are glad to pick up the wretched remains of your body, long, long before morning dawns. Your skin is scorched—your temples throb—your lips feel withered and dried—your burning eye-balls are screwed inwards against the brain. You have no hope but only in the saddle, and the freshness of the morning air.

CHAPTER XII.

My first bivouac.

THE course of the Jordan is from the north to the south, and in that direction, with very little of devious winding, it carries the shining waters of Galilee straight down into the solitudes of the Dead Sea. Speaking roughly, the river in that meridian, is a boundary between the people living under roofs, and the tented tribes that wander on the farther side. And so, as I went down in my way from Tiberias towards Jerusalem, along the western bank of the stream, my thinking all propended to the ancient world of herdsmen, and warriors, that lay so close over my bridle arm.

If a man, and an Englishman, be not born of his mother with a natural Chiffney-bit in his mouth, there comes to him a time for loathing the wearisome ways of society—a time for not liking tamed people—a time for not dancing quadrilles—not sitting in pews—a time for pretending that Milton, and Shelley, and all sorts of mere dead people, were greater in death than the first living Lord of the Treasury—a time in short for scoffing and railing—for speaking lightly of the very opera, and all our most cherished institutions. It is from nineteen, to two or three and twenty perhaps, that this war of the man against men is like to be waged most sullenly. You are yet in this smiling England, but you find yourself wending away to the dark sides of her mountains,—climbing the dizzy crags,—exulting in the fellowship of mists and clouds, and watching the storms how they gather, or proving the mettle of your mare upon the broad and dreary downs, because that you feel congenially with the yet unparcelled earth. A little while you are free, and unlabelled, like the ground that you compass, but Civilisation is coming, and coming; you, and your much loved waste lands will be

surely inclosed, and sooner, or later, you will be brought down to a state of utter usefulness—the ground will be curiously sliced into acres, and roods, and perches, and you, for all you sit so smartly in your saddle, you will be caught—you will be taken up from travel, as a colt from grass, to be trained, and tired, and matched, and run. All this in time, but first come continental tours, and the moody longing for Eastern travel; the downs and the moors of England can hold you no longer; with larger stride you burst away from these slips and patches of free land—you thread your path through the crowds of Europe, and at last on the banks of Jordan, you joyfully know that you are upon the very frontier of all accustomed respectabilities. There, on the other side of the river (you can swim it with one arm), there reigns the people that will be like to put you to death for *not* being a vagrant, for *not* being a robber, for *not* being armed, and houseless. There is comfort in that—health, comfort, and strength to one who is dying from very weariness of that poor, dear, middle-aged, deserving, accomplished, pedantic, and pains-taking governess Europe.

I had ridden for some hours along the right bank of Jordan, when I came to the Djesr el Medjamè (an old Roman bridge, I believe), which crossed the river. My Nazarene guide was riding ahead of the party, and now, to my surprise and delight, he turned leftwards, and led on over the bridge. I knew that the true road to Jerusalem must be mainly by the right bank of Jordan, but I supposed that my guide was crossing the bridge at this spot in order to avoid some bend in the river, and that he knew of a ford lower down by which we should regain the western bank. I made no question about the road, for I was but too glad to set my horse's hoofs upon the land of the wandering tribes. None of my party, except the Nazarene, knew the country. On we went through rich pastures upon the Eastern side of the water. I looked for the expected bend of the river, but far as I could see, it kept a straight southerly course; I still left my guide unquestioned.

The Jordan is not a perfectly accurate boundary betwixt roofs and tents, for soon after passing the bridge I came upon a cluster of huts. Some time afterwards the guide, upon being closely

questioned by my servants, confessed that the village which we had left behind was the last that we should see, but he declared that he knew a spot at which we should find an encampment of friendly Bedouins, who would receive me with all hospitality. I had long determined not to leave the East without seeing something of the wandering tribes, but I had looked forward to this as a pleasure to be found in the Desert between El Arish and Egypt—I had no idea that the Bedouins on the East of Jordan were accessible. My delight was so great at the near prospect of bread and salt in the tent of an Arab warrior, that I wilfully allowed my guide to go on and mislead me ; I saw that he was taking me out of the straight route towards Jerusalem, and was drawing me into the midst of the Bedouins, but the idea of his betraying me seemed (I know not why) so utterly absurd, that I could not entertain it for a moment ; I fancied it possible that the fellow had taken me out of my route in order to attempt some little mercantile enterprise with the tribe for which he was seeking, and I was glad of the opportunity which I might thus gain of coming in contact with the wanderers.

Not long after passing the village, a horseman met us ; it appeared that some of the cavalry of Ibrahim Pasha had crossed the river for the sake of the rich pastures on the eastern bank, and that this man was one of the troopers ; he stopped, and saluted ; he was obviously surprised at meeting an unarmed, or half-armed cavalcade, and at last fairly told us that we were on the wrong side of the river, and that if we proceeded, we must lay our account with falling amongst robbers. All this while, and throughout the day, my Nazarene kept well ahead of the party, and was constantly up in his stirrups, straining forward, and searching the distance for some objects which still remained unseen.

For the rest of the day we saw no human being ; we pushed on eagerly in the hope of coming up with the Bedouins before night-fall. Night came, and we still went on in our way till about ten o'clock. Then the thorough darkness of the night and the weariness of our beasts (which had already done two good days' journey in one) forced us to determine upon coming to a standstill. Upon the heights to the eastward we saw lights ; these

shone from caves on the mountain-side, inhabited, as the Nazarene told us, by rascals of a low sort—not real Bedouins—men whom we might frighten into harmlessness, but from whom there was no willing hospitality to be expected.

We heard at a little distance the brawling of a rivulet, and on the banks of this it was determined to establish our bivouac; we soon found the stream, and following its course for a few yards, came to a spot which was thought to be fit for our purpose. It was a sharply cold night in February, and when I dismounted I found myself standing upon some wet, rank herbage, that promised ill for the comfort of our resting-place. I had bad hopes of a fire, for the pitchy darkness of the night was a great obstacle to any successful search for fuel, and besides, the boughs of trees or bushes would be so full of sap in this early spring, that they would not be easily persuaded to burn. However, we were not likely to submit to a dark and cold bivouac without an effort, and my fellows groped forward through the darkness, till after advancing a few paces, they were happily stopped by a complete barrier of dead prickly bushes. Before our swords could be drawn to reap this glorious harvest, it was found, to our surprise, that the precious fuel was already hewn, and strewed along the ground in a thick mass. A spot fit for the fire was found with some difficulty, for the earth was moist, and the grass high and rank. At last there was a clicking of flint and steel, and presently there stood out from darkness one of the tawny faces of my muleteers, bent down to near the ground, and suddenly lit up by the glowing of the spark, which he courted with careful breath. Before long there was a particle of dry fibre, or leaf, that kindled to a tiny flame; then another was lit from that, and then another. Then small, crisp twigs, little bigger than bodkins, were laid athwart the growing fire. The swelling cheeks of the muleteer laid level with the earth, blew tenderly at first, and then more boldly, upon the young flame, which was daintily nursed and fed, and fed more plentifully when it gained good strength. At last a whole armful of dry bushes was piled up over the fire, and presently with loud, cheery cracking and crackling, a royal tall blaze shot up from the earth, and showed me once more the shapes and faces of my men, and the dim outlines of the horses and mules that stood grazing hard by.

My servants busied themselves in unpacking the baggage, as though we had arrived at an hotel—Shereef and his helpers unsaddled their cattle. We had left Tiberias without the slightest idea that we were to make our way to Jerusalem along the desolate side of the Jordan, and my servants (generally provident in those matters) had brought with them only, I think, some unleavened bread, and a rocky fragment of goat's-milk cheese. These treasures were produced. Tea, and the contrivances for making it, were always a standing part of my baggage. My men gathered in circle around the fire. The Nazarene was in a false position, from having misled us so strangely, and he would have shrunk back, poor devil, into the cold and outer darkness, but I made him draw near, and share the luxuries of the night. My quilt and my pelisse were spread, and the rest of my party had all their capotes, or pelisses, or robes of some sort, which furnished their couches. The men gathered in circle, some kneeling, some sitting, some lying reclined around our common hearth. Sometimes on one, sometimes on another, the flickering light would glare more fiercely. Sometimes it was the good Shereef that seemed the foremost, as he sat with venerable beard, the image of manly piety—unknowing of all geography, unknowing where he was, or whither he might go, but trusting in the goodness of God, and the clenching power of fate, and the good star of the Englishman. Sometimes like marble, the classic face of the Greek Mysseri would catch the sudden light, and then again by turns the ever-perturbed Dthemetri, with his odd Chinaman's eyes, and bristling, terrier-like moustache, shone forth illustrious.

I always liked the men who attended me on these Eastern travels, for they were all of them brave, cheery-hearted fellows, and although their following my career brought upon them a pretty large share of those toils and hardships which are so much more amusing to gentlemen than to servants, yet not one of them ever uttered or hinted a syllable of complaint, or even affected to put on an air of resignation; I always liked them, but never perhaps so much as when they were thus grouped together under the light of the bivouac fire. I felt towards them as my comrades, rather than as my servants, and took

delight in breaking bread with them, and merrily passing the cup.

The love of tea is a glad source of fellow-feeling between the Englishman and the Asiatic; in Persia it is drunk by all, and although it is a luxury that is rarely within the reach of the Osmanlees, there are few of them who do not know and love the blessed "tchäi." Our camp-kettle filled from the brook hummed doubtfully for awhile—then busily bubbled under the side-long glare of the flames—cups clinked and rattled—the fragrant steam ascended, and soon this little circlet in the wilderness grew warm and genial as my lady's drawing-room.

And after this there came the tchibouque—great comforter of those that are hungry and way-worn. And it has this virtue—it helps to destroy the gêne and awkwardness which one sometimes feels at being in company with one's dependents; for whilst the amber is at your lips, there is nothing ungracious in your remaining silent, or speaking pithily in short inter-whiff sentences. And for us that night there was pleasant and plentiful matter of talk; for the where we should be on the morrow, and the wherewithal we should be fed—whether by some ford we should regain the western banks of Jordan, or find bread and salt under the tents of a wandering tribe, or whether we should fall into the hands of the Philistines, and so come to see Death—the last, and greatest of all "the fine sights" that there be—these were questionings not dull nor wearisome to us, for we were all concerned in the answers. And it was not an ill-imagined morrow that we probed with our sharp guesses, for the lights of those low Philistines—the men of the caves still hung over our heads, and we knew by their yells that the fire of our bivouac had shown us.

At length we thought it well to seek for sleep. Our plans were laid for keeping up a good watch through the night. My quilt, and my pelisse, and my cloak, were spread out so that I might lie spokewise, with my feet towards the central fire. I wrapped my limbs daintily round, and gave myself positive orders to sleep like a veteran soldier. But I found that my attempt to sleep upon the earth that God gave me was more new and strange than I had fancied it. I had grown used to

the scene which was before me whilst I was sitting, or reclining by the side of the fire, but now that I laid myself down at length, it was the deep black mystery of the heavens that hung over my eyes—not an earthly thing in the way from my own very forehead right up to the end of all space. I grew proud of my boundless bed-chamber. I might have “found sermons” in all this greatness (if I had I should surely have slept), but such was not then my way. If this cherished Self of mine had built the Universe, I should have dwelt with delight on the “wonders of creation.” As it was, I felt rather the vain-glory of my promotion from out of mere rooms and houses into the midst of that grand, dark, infinite palace.

And then, too, my head, far from the fire, was in cold latitudes, and it seemed to me strange that I should be lying so still, and passive, whilst the sharp night breeze walked free over my cheek, and the cold damp clung to my hair, as though my face grew in the earth, and must bear with the footsteps of the wind, and the falling of the dew, as meekly as the grass of the field. Besides, I got puzzled and distracted by having to endure heat and cold at the same time, for I was always considering whether my feet were not over-devilled, and whether my face was not too well iced. And so when from time to time the watch quietly and gently kept up the languishing fire, he seldom, I think, was unseen to my restless eyes. Yet, at last, when they called me, and said that the morn would soon be dawning, I rose from a state of half-oblivion, not much unlike to sleep, though sharply qualified by a sort of vegetable’s consciousness of having been growing still colder and colder, for many, and many an hour.

CHAPTER XIII.

The Dead Sea.

THE grey light of the morning showed us for the first time, the ground which we had chosen for our resting-place. We found that we had bivouacked upon a little patch of barley, plainly belonging to the men of the caves. The dead bushes which we found so happily placed in readiness for our fire, had been strewn as a fence for the protection of the little crop. This was the only cultivated spot of ground which we had seen for many a league, and I was rather sorry to find that our night fire and our cattle had spread so much ruin upon this poor solitary slip of corn land.

The saddling and loading of our beasts, was a work which generally took nearly an hour, and before this was half over, daylight came. We could now see the men of the caves. They collected in a body, amounting, I should think, to nearly fifty, and rushed down towards our quarters with fierce shouts and yells. But the nearer they came, the slower they went; their shouts grew less resolute in tone, and soon ceased altogether. The fellows advanced to a thicket within thirty yards of us, and behind this "took up their position." My men without premeditation did exactly that which was best; they kept steadily to their work of loading the beasts without fuss, or hurry, and whether it was that they instinctively felt the wisdom of keeping quiet, or that they merely obeyed the natural inclination to silence, which one feels in the early morning—I cannot tell, but I know that except when they exchanged a syllable or two relative to the work they were about, not a word was said. I now believe, that this quietness of our party created an undefined terror in the minds of the cave-holders, and scared them from coming on; it gave them a notion that we were re-

lying on some resources which they knew not of. Several times the fellows tried to lash themselves into a state of excitement which might do instead of pluck. They would raise a great shout, and sway forward in a dense body from behind the thicket; but when they saw that their bravery, thus gathered to a head, did not even suspend the strapping of a portmanteau, or the tying of a hat-box, their shout lost its spirit, and the whole mass was irresistibly drawn back like a wave receding from the shore.

These attempts at an onset were repeated several times, but always with the same result; I remained under the apprehension of an attack for more than half an hour, and it seemed to me that the work of packing and loading had never been done so slowly. I felt inclined to tell my fellows to make their best speed, but just as I was going to speak, I observed that every one was doing his duty already; I therefore held my peace, and said not a word, till at last Mysseri led up my horse, and asked me if I were ready to mount.

We all marched off without hindrance.

After some time, we came across a party of Ibrahim's cavalry, which had bivouacked at no great distance from us. The knowledge that such a force was in the neighborhood may have conduced to the forbearance of the cave-holders.

We saw a scraggy-looking fellow nearly black, and wearing nothing but a cloth round the loins; he was tending flocks. Afterwards I came up with another of these goat-herds, whose helpmate was with him. They gave us some goat's milk, a welcome present. I pitied the poor devil of a goat-herd for having such a very plain wife. I spend an enormous quantity of pity upon that particular form of human misery.

About mid-day I began to examine my map, and to question my guide, who at last fell on his knees, and confessed that he knew nothing of the country in which we were. I was thus thrown upon my own resources, and calculating that on the preceding day, we had nearly performed a two days' journey, I concluded that the Dead Sea must be near. In this I was right, for at about 3 or 4 o'clock in the afternoon, I caught a first sight of its dismal face.

I went on, and came near to those waters of Death ; they stretched deeply into the southern desert, and before me, and all around, as far away as the eye could follow, blank hills piled high over hills, pale, yellow, and naked, walled up in her tomb for ever, the dead, and damned Gomorrah. There was no fly that hummed in the forbidden air, but instead a deep stillness—no grass grew from the earth—no weed peered through the void sand, but in mockery of all life, there were trees borne down by Jordan in some ancient flood, and these grotesquely planted upon the forlorn shore, spread out their grim skeleton arms all scorched, and charred to blackness, by the heats of the long, silent years.

I now struck off towards the debouchure of the river ; but I found that the country, though seemingly quite flat, was intersected by deep ravines, which did not show themselves until nearly approached. For some time my progress was much obstructed ; but at last I came across a track which led towards the river, and which might, as I hoped, bring me to a ford. I found, in fact, when I came to the river's side, that the track reappeared upon the opposite banks, plainly showing that the stream had been fordable at this place. Now, however, in consequence of the late rains, the river was quite impracticable for baggage horses. A body of waters, about equal to the Thames at Eton, but confined to a narrower channel, poured down in a current so swift and heavy, that the idea of passing with laden baggage horses was utterly forbidden. I could have swum across myself, and I might, perhaps, have succeeded in swimming a horse over. But this would have been useless, because in such case I must have abandoned, not only my baggage, but all my attendants, for none of them were able to swim, and without that resource, it would have been madness for them to rely upon the swimming of their beasts across such a powerful stream. I still hoped, however, that there might be a chance of passing the river at the point of its actual junction with the Dead Sea, and I therefore went on in that direction.

Night came upon us whilst laboring across gullies, and sandy mounds, and we were obliged to come to a stand-still quite suddenly, upon the very edge of a precipitous descent. Every step

towards the Dead Sea had brought us into a country more, and more dreary ; and this sand-hill, which we were forced to choose for our resting-place, was dismal enough. A few slender blades of grass, which here and there singly pierced the sand, mocked bitterly the hunger of our jaded beasts, and with our small remaining fragment of goat's milk rock, by way of supper, we were not much better off than our horses ; we wanted, too, the great requisite of a cheery bivouac—fire. Moreover, the spot on which we had been so suddenly brought to a stand-still was relatively high, and unsheltered, and the night wind blew swiftly, and cold.

The next morning I reached the debouchure of the Jordan, where I had hoped to find a bar of sand that might render its passage possible. The river, however, rolled its eddying waters fast down to the "sea," in a strong, deep stream that shut out all hope of crossing. It was always said that no vegetation could live in the neighborhood of the Dead Sea, but now I began to look upon my party and myself as forming a very fine "plantation ;" for never in the hunting sense of the term were men more thoroughly "planted."

It now seemed necessary either to construct a raft of some kind, or else to retrace my steps, and remount the banks of the Jordan. I had once happened to give some attention to the subject of military bridges—a branch of military science which includes the construction of rafts, and contrivances of the like sort, and I should have been very proud indeed, if I could have carried my party and my baggage across by dint of any idea gathered from Sir Howard Douglas, or Robinson Crusoe. But we were all faint, and languid from want of food, and besides there were no materials. Higher up the river there were bushes, and river plants, but nothing like timber, and the cord with which my baggage was tied to the pack-saddles amounted altogether to a very small quantity—not nearly enough to haul any sort of craft across the stream.

And now it was, if I remember rightly, that Dthemetri submitted to me a plan for putting to death the Nazarene, whose misguidance had been the cause of our difficulties. There was something fascinating in this suggestion, for the slaying of the

guide was of course easy enough, and would look like an act of what politicians call "vigor." If it were only to become known to my friends in England that I had calmly killed a fellow creature for taking me out of my way, I might remain perfectly quiet and tranquil for all the rest of my days, quite free from the danger of being considered "slow;" I might ever after live on upon my reputation like "single-speech Hamilton" in the last century, or "single-sin——" in this, without being obliged to take the trouble of doing any more harm in the world. This was a great temptation to an indolent person, but the motive was not strengthened by any sincere feeling of anger with the Nazarene: whilst the question of his life and death was debated, he was riding in front of our party, and there was something in the anxious writhing of his supple limbs that seemed to express a sense of his false position, and struck me as highly comic; I had no crotchet at that time against the punishment of the death, but I was unused to blood, and the proposed victim looked so thoroughly capable of enjoying life (if he could only get to the other side of the river), that I thought it would be hard for him to die, merely in order to give me a character for energy. Acting on the result of these considerations, and reserving to myself a free and unfettered discretion to have the poor villain shot at any future moment, I magnanimously decided that for the present he should live, and not die.

I bathed in the Dead Sea. The ground covered by the water, sloped so gradually, that I was not only forced to "sneak in," but to walk through the water nearly a quarter of a mile before I could get out of my depth. When at last I was able to attempt a dive, the salts held in solution made my eyes smart so sharply that the pain which I thus suffered acceding to the weakness occasioned by want of food, made me giddy and faint for some moments, but I soon grew better. I knew beforehand the impossibility of sinking in this buoyant water, but I was surprised to find that I could not swim at my accustomed pace; my legs and feet were lifted so high and dry out of the lake, that my stroke was baffled, and I found myself kicking against the thin air, instead of the dense fluid upon which I was swimming. The water is perfectly bright and clear; its taste detestable. After

finishing my attempts at swimming and diving, I took some time in regaining the shore, and before I began to dress, I found that the sun had already evaporated the water which clung to me, and that my skin was thickly encrusted with sulphate of magnesia.

CHAPTER XIV.

The Black Tents.

My steps were reluctantly turned towards the north. I had ridden some way and still it seemed that all life was fenced, and barred out from the desolate ground over which I was journeying. On the west there flowed the impassable Jordan; on the east stood an endless range of barren mountains, and on the south lay that desert sea that knew not the plashing of an oar; greatly therefore was I surprised, when suddenly there broke upon my ear, the long, ludicrous, persevering bray of a living donkey. I was riding at this time some few hundred yards a-head of all my party, except the Nazarene (who by a wise instinct kept closer to me than to Dthemetri), and I instantly went forward in the direction of the sound, for I fancied that where there were donkeys, there too most surely would be men. The ground on all sides of me seemed thoroughly void and lifeless, but at last I got down into a hollow, and presently a sudden turn brought me within thirty yards of an Arab encampment. The low black tents which I had so long lusted to see were right before me, and they were all teeming with live Arabs—men, women, and children.

I wished to have let my party behind know where I was, but I recollected that they would be able to trace me by the prints of my horse's hoofs in the sand, and having to do with Asiatics, I felt the danger of the slightest movement which might be looked upon as a sign of irresolution. Therefore, without looking behind me—without looking to the right or to the left, I rode straight up towards the foremost tent. Before this was strewn a semicircular fence of dead boughs, through which there was an opening opposite to the front of the tent. As I advanced, some twenty or thirty of the most uncouth looking fellows imaginable

came forward to meet me. In their appearance they showed nothing of the Bedouin blood ; they were of many colors, from dingy brown to jet black, and some of these last had much of the negro look about them. They were tall, powerful fellows, but awfully ugly. They wore nothing but the Arab shirts, confined at the waist by leathern belts.

I advanced to the gap left in the fence, and at once alighted from my horse. The chief greeted me after his fashion by alternately touching first my hand and then his own forehead, as if he were conveying the virtue of the touch like a spark of electricity. Presently I found myself seated upon a sheep-skin, which was spread for me under the sacred shade of Arabian canvass. The tent was of a long, narrow, oblong form, and contained a quantity of men, women and children, so closely huddled together, that there was scarcely one of them who was not in actual contact with his neighbor. The moment I had taken my seat, the chief repeated his salutations in the most enthusiastic manner, and then the people having gathered densely about me, got hold of my unresisting hand, and passed it round like a claret jug for the benefit of everybody. The women soon brought me a wooden bowl full of buttermilk, and welcome indeed came the gift to my hungry and thirsty soul.

After some time my party, as I had expected, came up, and when poor Dthemetri saw me on my sheep-skin, "the life and soul" of this ragamuffin party, he was so astounded that he even failed to check his cry of horror ; he plainly thought that now, at last, the Lord had delivered me (interpreter and all) into the hands of the lowest Philistines.

Mysseri carried a tobacco pouch slung at his belt, and as soon as its contents were known, the whole population of the tent began begging like spaniels for bits of the beloved weed. I concluded, from the abject manner of those people, that they could not possibly be thorough-bred Bedouins, and I saw too, that they must be in the very last stage of misery, for poor indeed is the man in these climes, who cannot command a pipeful of tobacco. I began to think that I had fallen amongst thorough savages, and it seemed likely enough that they would gain their very first knowledge of civilisation by ravishing and studying the con-

tents of my dearest portmanteaus, but still my impression was that they would hardly venture upon such an attempt; I observed, indeed, that they did not offer me the bread and salt, which I had understood to be the pledges of peace amongst wandering tribes, but I fancied that they refrained from this act of hospitality, not in consequence of any hostile determination, but in order that the notion of robbing me might remain for the present an "open question." I afterwards found that the poor fellows had no bread to offer. They were literally "out at grass;" it is true that they had a scanty supply of milk from goats, but they were living almost entirely upon certain grass stems, which were just in season at that time of the year. These, if not highly nourishing, are pleasant enough to the taste, and their acid juices came gratefully to thirsty lips.

CHAPTER XV.

Passage of the Jordan.

AND now Dthemetri began to enter into a negotiation with my hosts for a passage over the river. I never interfered with my worthy Dragoman upon these occasions, because from my entire ignorance of the Arabic, I should have been quite unable to exercise any real control over his words, and it would have been silly to break the stream of his eloquence to no purpose. I have reason to fear, however, that he lied transcendantly, and especially in representing me as the bosom friend of Ibrahim Pasha. The mention of that name produced immense agitation and excitement, and the Sheik explained to Dthemetri the grounds of the infinite respect which he and his tribe entertained for the Pasha. A few weeks before Ibrahim had craftily sent a body of troops across the Jordan. The force went warily round to the foot of the mountains on the East, so as to cut off the retreat of this tribe, and then surrounded them as they lay encamped in the vale; their camels, and indeed all their possessions worth taking, were carried off by the soldiery, and moreover the then Sheik, together with every tenth man of the tribe, was brought out and shot. You would think that this conduct on the part of the Pasha might not procure for his "friend" a very gracious reception amongst the people whom he had thus despoiled and decimated, but the Asiatic seems to be animated with a feeling of profound respect, almost bordering upon affection, for all who have done him any bold and violent wrong, and there is always too, so much of vague and undefined apprehension mixed up with his really well-founded alarms, that I can see no limit to the yielding and bending of his mind when it is worked upon by the idea of power.

After some discussion the Arabs agreed, as I thought, to con-

duct me to a ford, and we moved on towards the river, followed by seventeen of the most able-bodied of the tribe, under the guidance of several grey-bearded elders, and Sheik Ali Djoub-ran at the head of the whole detachment. Upon leaving the encampment a sort of ceremony was performed, for the purpose, it seemed, of ensuring, if possible, a happy result for the undertaking. There was an uplifting of arms, and a repeating of words, that sounded like formulæ, but there were no prostrations, and I did not understand that the ceremony was of a religious character. The tented Arabs are looked upon as very bad Mahometans.

We arrived upon the banks of the river—not at a ford, but at a deep and rapid part of the stream, and I now understood that it was the plan of these men, if they helped me at all, to transport me across the river by some species of raft. But a reaction had taken place in the opinions of many, and a violent dispute arose, upon a motion which seemed to have been made by some honorable member, with a view to robbery. The fellows all gathered together in circle, at a little distance from my party, and there disputed with great vehemence and fury, for nearly two hours. I can't give a correct report of the debate, for it was held in a barbarous dialect of the Arabic, unknown to my Dragoman. I recollect, I sincerely felt at the time that the arguments in favor of robbing me must have been almost unanswerable, and I gave great credit to the speakers on my side for the ingenuity and sophistry which they must have shown in maintaining the fight so well.

During the discussion, I remained lying in front of my baggage, which had all been taken from the pack-saddles, and placed upon the ground. I was so languid from want of food, that I had scarcely animation enough to feel as deeply interested as you would suppose, in the result of the discussion. I thought, however, that the pleasantest toys to play with, during this interval, were my pistols, and now and then, when I listlessly visited my loaded barrels with the swivel ramrods, or drew a sweet, musical click from my English firelocks, it seemed to me that I exercised a slight and gentle influence on the debate. Thanks to Ibrahim Pasha's terrible visitation, the

men of the tribe were wholly unarmed, and my advantage in this respect might have counter-balanced in some measure the superiority of numbers.

Mysseri (not interpreting in Arabic) had no duty to perform, and he seemed to be faint and listless as myself. Shereef looked perfectly resigned to any fate. But Dthemetri (faithful terrier!) was bristling with zeal and watchfulness; he could not understand the debate, which indeed was carried on at a distance too great to be easily heard, even if the language had been familiar; but he was always on the alert, and now and then conferring with men who had straggled out of the assembly; at last he found an opportunity of making a proposal, which at once produced immense sensation; he offered, on my behalf, that if the tribe should bear themselves loyally towards me, and take my party and my baggage in safety to the other bank of the river, I should give them a "teskeri," or written certificate of their good conduct, which might avail them hereafter in the hour of their direst need. This proposal was received, and instantly accepted by all the men of the tribe there present, with the utmost enthusiasm. I was to give the men, too, a "bak-sheish," that is, a present of money, which is usually made upon the conclusion of any sort of treaty; but, although the people of the tribe were so miserably poor, they seemed to look upon the pecuniary part of the arrangement as a matter quite trivial in comparison with the "teskeri." Indeed the sum which Dthemetri promised them was extremely small, and not the slightest attempt was made to extort any further reward.

The Council now broke up, and most of the men rushed madly towards me, and overwhelmed me with vehement gratulations; they caressed my boots with much affection, and my hands were severely kissed.

The Arabs now went to work in right earnest to effect the passage of the river. They had brought with them a great number of the skins which they use for carrying water in the desert; these they filled with air, and fastened several of them to small boughs which they cut from the banks of the river. In this way they constructed a raft not more than about four feet square, but rendered buoyant by the inflated skins which sup-

ported it. On this a portion of my baggage was placed, and was firmly tied to it by the cords used on my pack-saddles. The little raft, with its weighty cargo, was then gently lifted into the water, and I had the satisfaction to see that it floated well.

Twelve of the Arabs now stripped, and tied inflated skins to their loins; six of the men went down into the river, got in front of the little raft, and pulled it off a few feet from the bank. The other six then dashed into the stream with loud shouts, and swam along after the raft, pushing it from behind. Off went the craft in capital style at first, for the stream was easy on the eastern side, but I saw that the tug was to come, for the main torrent swept round in a bend near the western banks of the river.

The old men with their long grey grisly beards stood shouting and cheering, praying and commanding. At length the raft entered upon the difficult part of its course; the whirling stream seized and twisted it about, and then bore it rapidly downwards; the swimming men flagged, and seemed to be beat in the struggle. But now the old men on the bank, with their rigid arms uplifted straight, sent forth a cry and a shout that tore the wide air into tatters, and then to make their urging yet more strong, they shrieked out the dreadful syllables, "brahim Pasha!" The swimmers, one moment before so blown, and so weary, found lungs to answer the cry, and shouting back the name of their great destroyer, they dashed on through the torrent and bore the raft in safety to the western bank.

Afterwards the swimmers returned with the raft, and attached to it the rest of my baggage. I took my seat upon the top of the cargo, and the raft thus laden, passed the river in the same way and with the same struggle as before. The skins, however, not being perfectly air-tight, had lost a great part of their buoyancy, so that I, as well as the luggage that passed on this last voyage, got wet in the waters of Jordan. The raft could not be trusted for another trip, and the rest of my party passed the river in a different, and (for them) much safer way. Inflated skins were fastened to their loins, and thus supported, they were tugged across by Arabs swimming on either side of them. The horses and mules were thrown into the water, and forced to swim over; the poor beasts had a hard struggle for their lives

in that swift stream, and I thought that one of the horses would have been drowned, for he was too weak to gain a footing on the western bank, and the stream bore him down. At last, however, he swam back to the side from which he had come. Before dark all had passed the river except this one horse and old Shereef. He, poor fellow, was shivering on the eastern bank, for his dread of the passage was so great that he delayed it as long as he could, and at last it became so dark that he was obliged to wait till the morning.

I lay that night on the banks of the river, and at a little distance from me the Arabs made a fire, round which they sat in a circle. They were made most savagely happy by the tobacco with which I supplied them, and they had determined to make the whole night one smoking festival. The poor fellows had only one broken bowl, without any tube at all, but this morsel of a pipe they passed round from one to the other, allowing to each a fixed number of whiffs. In that way they passed the whole night.

The next morning old Shereef was brought across. It was a strange sight to see this solemn old Mussulman with his shaven head, and his sacred beard, sprawling and puffing upon the surface of the water. When at last he reached the bank, the people told him that by his baptism in Jordan he had surely become a mere Christian. Poor Shereef!—the holy man!—the descendant of the Prophet!—he was sadly hurt by the taunt, and the more so as he seemed to feel there was some foundation for it, and that he really may have absorbed some Christian errors.

When all was ready for departure, I wrote the “Teskeri” in French, and delivered it to Sheik Ali Djoubran, together with the promised “baksheish;” he was exceedingly grateful, and I parted upon very good terms from this ragged tribe.

In two or three hours I gained Rihah, a village which is said to occupy the site of ancient Jericho. There was one building there which I observed with some emotion, for although it may not have been actually standing in the days of Jericho, it contained at this day a most interesting collection of—modern loaves.

Some hours after sun-set I reached the Convent of Santa Saba, and there remained for the night.

CHAPTER XVI.

Terra Santa.

THE enthusiasm that had glowed, or seemed to glow, within me for one blessed moment when I knelt by the shrine of the Blessed Virgin at Nazareth, was not rekindled at Jerusalem. In the stead of the solemn gloom, and the deep stillness that of right belonged to the Holy City, there was the hum and the bustle of active life. It was the "height of the season." The Easter ceremonies drew near; the Pilgrims were flocking in from all quarters, and although their objects were partly at least of a religious character, yet their "arrivals" brought as much stir and liveliness to the city, as if they had come up to marry their daughters.

The votaries who every year crowd to the Holy Sepulchre are chiefly of the Greek and Armenian Churches. They are not drawn into Palestine by a mere longing to stand upon the ground trodden by our Saviour, but rather they perform the pilgrimage as a plain duty, which is strongly inculcated by their religion. A very great proportion of those who belong to the Greek Church, contrive at some time or other in the course of their lives, to achieve the enterprise. Many, in their infancy and childhood, are brought to the holy sites by their parents, but those who have not had this advantage will often make it the main object of their lives to save money enough for this holy undertaking.

The Pilgrims begin to arrive in Palestine some weeks before the Easter festival of the Greek Church; they come from Egypt—from all parts of Syria—from Armenia and Asia Minor—from Stamboul, from Roumelia, from the provinces of the Danube, and from all the Russias. Most of these people bring with them some articles of merchandize, but I myself be-

lieve (notwithstanding the common taunt against pilgrims), that they do this rather as a mode of paying the expenses of their journey, than from a spirit of mercenary speculation; they generally travel in families, for the women are of course more ardent than their husbands in undertaking these pious enterprises, and they take care to bring with them all their children, however young, for the efficacy of the rites does not depend upon the age of the votary, so that people whose careful mothers have obtained for them the benefit of the pilgrimage in early life, are saved from the expense and trouble of undertaking the journey at a later age. The superior veneration so often excited by objects that are distant and unknown, shows not perhaps the wrongheadedness of a man, but rather the transcendent power of his Imagination; however this may be, and whether it is by mere obstinacy that they poke their way through intervening distance, or whether they come by the winged strength of Fancy, quite certainly the Pilgrims who flock to Palestine from the most remote homes are the people most eager in the enterprise, and in number, too, they bear a very high proportion to the whole mass.

The great bulk of the Pilgrims make their way by sea to the port of Jaffa. A number of families will charter a vessel amongst them, all bringing their own provisions, which are of the simplest and cheapest kind. On board every vessel thus freighted, there is, I believe, a Priest who helps the people in their religious exercises, and tries (and fails) to maintain something like order and harmony. The vessels employed in this service are usually Greek brigs or brigantines, and schooners, and the number of passengers stowed in them is almost always horribly excessive. The voyages are sadly protracted, not only by the land-seeking, storm-flying habits of the Greek seamen, but also by their endless schemes and speculations, which are for ever tempting them to touch at the nearest port. The voyage, too, must be made in winter, in order that Jerusalem may be reached some weeks before the Greek Easter, and thus by the time they attain to the holy shrines, the Pilgrims have really and truly undergone a very respectable quantity of suffering. I once saw one of these pious cargoes put ashore on

the coast of Cyprus, where they had touched for the purpose of visiting (not Paphos, but) some Christian sanctuary. I never saw (no, never even in the most horridly stuffy ball room) such a discomfutable collection of human beings. Long huddled together in a pitching and rolling prison—fed on beans—exposed to some real danger, and to terrors without end, they had been tumbled about for many wintry weeks in the chopping seas of the Mediterranean; as soon as they landed, they stood upon the beach and chaunted a hymn of thanks; the chaunt was morne and doleful, but really the poor people were looking so miserable that one could not fairly expect from them any lively outpouring of gratitnde.

When the Pilgrims have landed at Jaffa they hire camels, horses, mules or donkeys, and make their way as well as they can to the Holy City. The space fronting the Church of the Holy Sepulchre soon becomes a kind of Bazaar, or rather, perhaps, reminds you of an English Fair. On this spot the Pilgrims display their merchandize, and there too the trading residents of the place offer their goods for sale. I have never, I think, seen elsewhere in Asia, so much commercial animation as upon this square of ground by the Church door; the “money changers” seemed to be almost as brisk and lively as if they had been *within* the Temple.

When I entered the Church I found a Babel of worshippers. Greek, Roman, and Armenian priests were performing their different rites in various nooks and corners, and crowds of disciples were rushing about in all directions,—some laughing and talking,—some begging, but most of them going about in a regular and methodical way to kiss the sanctified spots, and speak the appointed syllables, and lay down the accustomed coin. If this kissing of the shrines had seemed as though it were done at the bidding of Enthusiasm, or of any poor sentiment, even feebly approaching to it, the sight would have been less odd to English eyes; but as it was, I stared to see grown men thus steadily and carefully embracing the sticks and the stones—not from love or from zeal (else God forbid that I should have stared), but from a calm sense of duty; they seemed to

be not "working out," but *transacting* the great business of Salvation.

Dthemetri, however, who generally came with me when I went out, in order to do duty as interpreter, really had in him some enthusiasm; he was a zealous and almost fanatical member of the Greek Church, and had long since performed the pilgrimage, so now great indeed was the pride and delight with which he guided me from one holy spot to another. Every now and then, when he came to an unoccupied shrine, he fell down on his knees and performed devotion; he was almost distracted by the temptations that surrounded him; there were so many stones absolutely requiring to be kissed, that he rushed about happily puzzled and sweetly teased, like "Jack among the maidens."

A Protestant, familiar with the Holy Scriptures, but ignorant of tradition and the geography of Modern Jerusalem, finds himself a good deal "mazed" when he first looks for the sacred sites. The Holy Sepulchre is not in a field without the walls, but in the midst, and in the best part of the town under the roof of the great Church which I have been talking about; it is a handsome tomb of oblong form, partly subterranean and partly above ground; and closed in on all sides, except the one by which it is entered. You descend into the interior by a few steps, and there find an altar with burning tapers. This is the spot which is held in greater sanctity than any other at Jerusalem. When you have seen enough of it, you feel perhaps weary of the busy crowd and inclined for a gallop; you ask your Dragoman whether there will be time before sunset to procure horses and take a ride to Mount Calvary. Mount Calvary, Signor?—*eccolo!*—it is *up stairs—on the first floor*. In effect you ascend, if I remember rightly, just thirteen steps, and then you are shown the now golden sockets in which the crosses of our Lord and the two thieves were fixed. All this is startling, but the truth is, that the city having gathered round the Sepulchre, which is the main point of interest, has crept northward, and thus in a great measure are occasioned the many geographical surprises which puzzle the "Bible Christian."

The church of the Holy Sepulchre comprises very compendiously almost all the spots associated with the closing career of our Lord. Just there, on your right, he stood and wept; by the pillar on your left he was scourged; on the spot just before you he was crowned with the crown of thorns; up there he was crucified, and down here he was buried. A locality is assigned to every the minutest event connected with the recorded history of our Saviour; even the spot where the cock crew, when Peter denied his Master, is ascertained and surrounded by the walls of an Armenian convent. Many Protestants are wont to treat these traditions contemptuously, and those who distinguish themselves from their brethren by the appellation of "Bible Christians," are almost fierce in their denunciation of these supposed errors.

It is admitted, I believe, by everybody, that the formal sanctification of these spots was the act of the Empress Helena, the mother of Constantine, but I think it is fair to suppose that she was guided by a careful regard to the then prevailing traditions. Now the nature of the ground upon which Jerusalem stands, is such that the localities belonging to the events there enacted might have been more easily and permanently ascertained by tradition than those of any city that I know of. Jerusalem, whether ancient or modern, was built upon and surrounded by sharp, salient rocks, intersected by deep ravines. Up to the time of the siege, Mount Calvary, of course, must have been well enough known to the people of Jerusalem; the destruction of the mere buildings could not have obliterated from any man's memory the names of those steep rocks and narrow ravines in the midst of which the city had stood. It seems to me, therefore, highly probable that in fixing the site of Calvary, the Empress was rightly guided. Recollect, too, that the voice of tradition at Jerusalem is quite unanimous, and that Romans, Greeks, Armenians, and Jews, all hating each other sincerely, concur in assigning the same localities to the events told in the Gospel. I concede, however, that the attempt of the Empress to ascertain the sites of the minor events cannot be safely relied upon. With respect, for instance, to the certainty of the spot where the cock crew, I am far from being convinced.

Supposing that the Empress acted arbitrarily in fixing the

holy sites, it would seem that she followed the Gospel of St. John, and that the geography sanctioned by her can be more easily reconciled with that history than with the accounts of the other Evangelists.

The authority exercised by the Mussulman Government in relation to the Holy sites, is in one view somewhat humbling to the Christians, for it is almost as an arbitrator between the contending sects (this always, of course, for the sake of pecuniary advantage), that the Mussulman lends his contemptuous aid; he not only grants but *enforces* toleration. All persons, of whatever religion, are allowed to go as they will into every part of the church of the Holy Sepulchre, but in order to prevent indecent contests, and also from motives arising out of money payments, the Turkish Government assigns the peculiar care of each sacred spot to one of the ecclesiastic bodies. Since this guardianship carries with it the receipt of the coins which the pilgrims leave upon the shrines, it is strenuously fought for by all the rival Churches, and the artifices of intrigue are busily exerted at Stamboul in order to procure the issue or revocation of the Firmans, by which the coveted privilege is granted. In this strife the Greek Church has of late years signally triumphed, and the most famous of the shrines are committed to the care of their priesthood. They possess the golden socket in which stood the cross of our Lord, whilst the Latins are obliged to content themselves with the apertures in which were inserted the crosses of the two thieves; they are naturally discontented with that poor privilege, and sorrowfully look back to the days of their former glory—the days when Napoleon was Emperor, and Sebastiani was minister at the Porte. It seems that the “citizen” Sultan, old Louis Philippe, has done very little indeed for Holy Church in Palestine.

Although the Pilgrims perform their devotions at the several shrines with so little apparent enthusiasm, they are driven to the verge of madness by the miracle which is displayed to them on Easter Saturday. Then it is that the heaven-sent fire issues from the Holy Sepulchre. The Pilgrims all assemble in the great Church, and already, long before the wonder is worked, they are wrought by anticipation of God’s sign, as well as by

their struggles for room and breathing space, to a most frightful state of excitement. At length the Chief Priest of the Greeks, accompanied (of all people in the world) by the Turkish Governor, enters the tomb. After this there is a long pause, and then, suddenly, from out of the small apertures on either side of the Sepulchre, there issue long, shining flames. The pilgrims now rush forward, madly struggling to light their tapers at the holy fire. This is the dangerous moment, and many lives are often lost.

The year before that of my going to Jerusalem, Ibrahim Pasha, from some whim or motive of policy, chose to witness the miracle. The vast Church was of course thronged, as it always is on that awful day. It seems that the appearance of the fire was delayed for a very long time, and that the growing frenzy of the people was heightened by suspense. Many, too, had already sunk under the effect of the heat and the stifling atmosphere, when at last the fire flashed from the Sepulchre. Then a terrible struggle ensued—many sunk and were crushed. Ibrahim had taken his station in one of the galleries, but now, feeling perhaps his brave blood warmed by the sight and sound of such strife, he took upon himself to quiet the people by his personal presence, and descended into the body of the Church with only a few guards; he had forced his way into the midst of the dense crowd, when unhappily he fainted away; his guards shrieked out, and the event instantly became known. A body of soldiers recklessly forced their way through the crowd, trampling over every obstacle that they might save the life of their general. Nearly two hundred people were killed in the struggle.

The following year, however, the Government took better measures for the prevention of these calamities. I was not present at the ceremony, having gone away from Jerusalem some time before, but I afterwards returned into Palestine, and I then learned that the day had passed off without any disturbance of a fatal kind. It is, however, almost too much to expect that so many ministers of peace can assemble without finding some occasion for strife, and in that year a tribe of wild Bedouins became the subject of discord; these men, it seems, led an Arab life in some of the desert tracts bordering on the neighborhood of

Jerusalem, but were not connected with any of the great ruling tribes. Some whim or notion of policy had induced them to embrace Christianity, but they were grossly ignorant of the rudiments of their adopted faith, and having no priests with them in their desert, they had as little knowledge of religious ceremonies as of Religion itself; they were not even capable of conducting themselves in a place of worship with ordinary decorum, but would interrupt the service with scandalous cries and warlike shouts. Such is the account the Latins give of them, but I have never heard the other side of the question. These wild fellows, notwithstanding their entire ignorance of all religion, are yet claimed by the Greeks, not only as proselytes who have embraced Christianity generally, but as converts to the particular doctrines and practice of their church. The people thus alleged to have concurred in the great schism of the Eastern Empire, are never, I believe, within the walls of a church, or even of any building at all, except upon this occasion of Easter, and as they then never fail to find a row of some kind going on by the side of the Sepulchre, they fancy, it seems, that the ceremonies there enacted are funeral games, of a martial character, held in honor of a deceased chieftain, and that a Christian festival is a peculiar kind of battle fought between walls and without cavalry. It does not appear, however, that these men are guilty of any ferocious acts, or that they attempt to commit depredations. The charge against them is merely, that by their way of applauding the performance—by their horrible cries and frightful gestures, they destroy the solemnity of divine service, and upon this ground the Franciscans obtained a firman for the exclusion of such tumultuous worshippers. The Greeks, however, did not choose to lose the aid of their wild converts, merely because they were a little backward in their religious education, and they therefore persuaded them to defy the firman by entering the city *en masse*, and overawing their enemies. The Franciscans, as well as the Government authorities, were obliged to give way, and the Arabs triumphantly marched into the church. The festival, however, must have seemed to them rather flat, for although there may have been some “casualties” in the way of black eyes, and noses

bloody, and women "missing," there was no return of "killed."

Formerly the Latin Catholics concurred in acknowledging (but not I hope in working) the annual miracle of the heavenly fire, but they have for many years withdrawn their countenance from this exhibition, and they now repudiate it as a trick of the Greek church. Thus, of course, the violence of feeling with which the rival churches meet at the Holy Sepulchre, on Easter Saturday, is greatly increased, and a disturbance of some kind is certain. In the year I speak of, though no lives were lost, there was, as it seems, a tough struggle in the church. I was amused at hearing of a taunt that was thrown that day upon an English traveller: he had taken his station in a convenient part of the church, and was no doubt displaying that peculiar air of serenity and gratification with which an English gentleman usually looks on at a row, when one of the Franciscans came by, all reeking from the fight, and was so disgusted at the coolness and placid contentment of the Englishman (who was a guest at the convent, that he forgot his monkish humility as well as the duties of hospitality, and plainly said, "You sleep under our roof—you eat our bread—you drink our wine, and then when Easter Saturday comes you don't fight for us!")

Yet these rival churches go on quietly enough till their blood is up. The terms on which they live remind one of the peculiar relation subsisting at Cambridge between "town and gown."

These contests and disturbances certainly do not originate with the lay pilgrims, the great body of whom are, as I believe, quiet and inoffensive people; it is true, however, that their pious enterprise is believed by them to operate as a counterpoise for a multitude of sins, whether past or future, and perhaps they exert themselves in after life to restore the balance of good and evil. The Turks have a maxim, which, like most cynical apothegms carries with it the buzzing trumpet of falsehood, as well as the small, fine "sting of truth." "If your friend has made the pilgrimage once, distrust him—if he has made the pilgrimage twice, cut him dead!" The caution is said to be as applicable to the visitants of Jerusalem as to those of Mecca, but

I cannot help believing that the frailties of all the Hadjis,* whether Christian or Mahometan, are greatly exaggerated. I certainly regarded the pilgrims to Palestine as a well-disposed, orderly body of people, not strongly enthusiastic, but desirous to comply with the ordinances of their religion, and to attain the great end of salvation as quietly and economically as possible.

When the solemnities of Easter are concluded, the pilgrims move off in a body to complete their good work, by visiting the sacred scenes in the neighborhood of Jerusalem, including the Wilderness of John the Baptist, Bethlehem, and above all the Jordan, for to bathe in those sacred waters is one of the chief objects of the expedition. All the pilgrims—men, women, and children, are submerged, *en chemise*, and the saturated linen is carefully wrapped up, and preserved as a burial dress that shall inure for salvation in the realms of death.

I saw the burial of a pilgrim; he was a Greek—miserably poor and very old—he had just crawled into the Holy City, and had reached at once the goal of his pious journey and the end of his sufferings upon earth; there was no coffin nor wrapper, and as I looked full upon the face of the dead, I saw how deeply it was rutted with the ruts of age and misery. The priest, strong and portly, fresh, fat, and alive with the life of the animal kingdom—unpaid, or ill paid for his work, would scarcely deign to mutter out his forms, but hurried over the words with shocking haste; presently he called out impatiently—"Yalla! Goor!" (Come! look sharp!) and then the dead Greek was seized; his limbs yielded inertly to the rude men that handled them, and down he went into his grave, so roughly bundled in that his neck was twisted by the fall,—so twisted, that if the sharp malady of life were still upon him the old man would have shrieked and groaned, and the lines of his face would have quivered with pain; the lines of his face were not moved, and the old man lay still and heedless—so well cured of that tedious life-ache, that nothing could hurt him now. His clay was *itself again*—cool, firm, and tough. The pilgrim had found great rest; I threw the accustomed handful of the holy soil upon his patient face,

* Hadji—a pilgrim.

and then, and in less than a minute, the earth closed coldly round him.

I did not say "Alas!"—(nobody ever does that I know of, though the word is so frequently written). I thought the old man had got rather well out of the scrape of being alive and poor.

The destruction of the mere buildings in such a place as Jerusalem would not involve the permanent dispersion of the inhabitants, for the rocky neighborhood in which the town is situated abounds in caves, which would give an easy refuge to the people until they gained an opportunity of rebuilding their dwellings. Therefore I could not help looking upon the Jews of Jerusalem, as being in some sort the representatives, if not the actual descendants, of the rascals who crucified our Saviour. Supposing this to be the case, I felt that there would be some interest in knowing how the events of the Gospel History were regarded by the Israelites of modern Jerusalem. The result of my inquiry upon this subject, was, so far as it went, entirely favorable to the truth of Christianity. I understood that *the performance of the miracles was not doubted by any of the Jews in the place*; all of them concurred in attributing the works of our Lord to the influence of magic, but they were divided as to the species of enchantment from which the power proceeded; the great mass of the Jewish people believed, I fancy, that the miracles had been wrought by aid of the powers of darkness, but many, and those the more enlightened, would call Jesus "the good Magician." To Europeans repudiating the notion of all magic, good or bad, the opinion of the Jews as to the agency by which the miracles were worked, is a matter of no importance, but the circumstance of their admitting that those miracles *were in fact performed*, is certainly curious, and perhaps not quite immaterial.

If you stay in the Holy City long enough to fall into anything like regular habits of amusement and occupation, and to become in short for the time a "man about town" at Jerusalem, you will necessarily lose the enthusiasm which you may have felt when you trod the sacred soil for the first time, and it will then seem almost strange to you to find yourself so thoroughly surrounded in all your daily pursuits by the signs and sounds of re-

ligion. Your Hotel is a monastery—your rooms are cells—the landlord is a stately abbot and the waiters are hooded monks.— If you walk out of the town you find yourself on the Mount of Olives, or in the Valley of Jehoshaphat, or on the Hill of Evil Counsel. If you mount your horse and extend your rambles, you will be guided to the wilderness of St. John, or the birth-place of our Saviour. Your club is the great Church of the Holy Sepulchre, where everybody meets everybody every day. If you lounge through the town, your Bond Street is the Via Dolorosa, and the object of your hopeless affections is some maid or matron all forlorn, and sadly shrouded in her pilgrim's robe. If you would hear music, it must be the chaunting of friars—if you look at pictures, you see Virgins with mis-fore-shortened arms, or devils out of drawing, or angels tumbling up the skies in impious perspective. If you make any purchases you must go again to the church doors, and when you inquire for the manufactures of the place, you find that they consist of double-blessed beads and sanctified shells. These last are the favorite tokens which the pilgrims carry off with them; the shell is graven or rather scratched on the white side with a rude drawing of the Blessed Virgin, or of the Crucifixion, or some other scriptural subject; and having passed this stage, it goes into the hands of a priest; by him it is subjected to some process for rendering it efficacious against the schemes of our ghostly enemy; the manufacture is then complete, and deemed to be fit for use.

The village of Bethlehem lies prettily couched on the slope of a hill. The sanctuary is a subterranean grotto, and is committed to the joint-guardianship of the Romans, Greeks, and Armenians, who vie with each other in adorning it. Beneath an altar gorgeously decorated, and lit with everlasting fires, there stands the low slab of stone which marks the holy site of the Nativity; and near to this is a hollow scooped out of the living rock. Here the infant Jesus was laid. Near the spot of the Nativity is the rock against which the Blessed Virgin was leaning when she presented her babe to the adoring shepherds.

Many of those Protestants who are accustomed to despise tradition, consider that this sanctuary is altogether unscriptural—

that a grotto is not a stable, and that mangers are made of wood. It is perfectly true, however, that the many grottos and caves which are found among the rocks of Judea were formerly used for the reception of cattle ; they are so used at this day ; I have myself seen grottos appropriated to this purpose.

You know what a sad and sombre decorum it is that outwardly reigns through the lands oppressed by Moslem sway. The Mahometans make beauty their prisoner, and enforce such a stern and gloomy morality, or at all events such a frightfully close semblance of it, that far and long the wearied traveller may go without catching one glimpse of outward happiness. By a strange chance in these latter days, it happened, that alone of all the places in the land, this Bethlehem, the native village of our Lord, escaped the moral yoke of the Mussulmans, and heard again, after ages of dull oppression, the cheering clatter of social freedom and the voices of laughing girls. It was after an insurrection which had been raised against the authority of Mehemet Ali, that Bethlehem was freed from the hateful laws of Asiatic decorum. The Mussulmans of the village had taken an active part in the movement, and when Ibrahim had quelled it, his wrath was still so hot that he put to death every one of the few Mahometans of Bethlehem who had not already fled. The effect produced upon the Christian inhabitants by the sudden removal of this restraint was immense. The village smiled once more. It is true that such sweet freedom could not long endure. Even if the population of the place should continue to be entirely Christian, the sad decorum of the Mussulmans, or rather of the Asiatics, would sooner or later be restored by the force of opinion and custom. But for a while the sunshine would last, and when I was at Bethlehem, though long after the flight of the Mussulmans, the cloud of Moslem propriety had not yet come back to cast its cold shadow upon life. When you reach that gladsome village, pray Heaven there still may be heard there the voice of free, innocent girls. It will sound so dearly welcome !

To a Christian, and thorough-bred Englishman, not even the licentiousness which generally accompanies it, can compensate for the oppressiveness of that horrible outward decorum, which

turns the cities and the palaces of Asia into deserts and gaols. So, I say, when you see, and hear them, those romping girls of Bethlehem will gladden your very soul. Distant at first, and then nearer and nearer, the timid flock will gather around you with their large, burning eyes gravely fixed against yours, so that they see into your brain, and if you imagine evil against them, they will know of your ill thought before it is yet well born, and will fly, and be gone in the moment. But presently if you will only look virtuous enough to prevent alarm, and vicious enough to avoid looking silly, the blithe maidens will draw nearer and nearer to you, and soon there will be one, the bravest of the sisters, who will venture right up to your side, and touch the hem of your coat, in playful defiance of the danger, and then the rest will follow the daring of their youthful leader, and gather close round you, and hold a shrill controversy on the wondrous formation that you call a hat, and the cunning of the hands that clothed you with cloth so fine; and then growing more profound in their researches, they will pass from the study of your mere dress, to a serious contemplation of your stately height, and your nut-brown hair, and the ruddy glow of your English cheeks. And if they catch a glimpse of your ungloved fingers, then again will they make the air ring with their sweet screams of wonder and amazement, as they compare the fairness of your hand with their warmer tints, and even with the hues of your own sunburnt face; instantly the ringleader of the gentle rioters imagines a new sin; with tremulous boldness she touches—then grasps your hand, and smoothes it gently betwixt her own, and pries curiously into its make and color, as though it were silk of Damascus, or shawl of Cashmere. And when they see you even then, still sage and gentle, the joyous girls will suddenly, and screamingly, and all at once, explain to each other that you are surely quite harmless, and innocent—a lion that makes no spring—a bear that never hugs, and upon this faith, one after the other, they will take your passive hand, and strive to explain it, and make it a theme and a controversy. But the one—the fairest, and the sweetest of all, is yet the most timid; she shrinks from the daring deeds of her playmates, and seeks shelter behind their sleeves, and strives

to screen her glowing consciousness from the eyes that look upon her ; but her laughing sisters will have none of this cowardice—they vow that the fair one *shall* be their complice—*shall* share their dangers—*shall* touch the hand of the stranger ; they seize her small wrist, and drag her forward by force, and at last, whilst yet she strives to turn away, and to cover up her whole soul under the folds of downcast eyelids, they vanquish her utmost strength—they vanquish your utmost modesty, and marry her hand to yours. The quick pulse springs from her fingers, and throbs like a whisper upon your listening palm. For an instant her large, timid eyes are upon you—in an instant they are shrouded again, and there comes a blush so burning, that the frightened girls stay their shrill laughter, as though they had played too perilously, and harmed their gentle sister. A moment, and all, with a sudden intelligence, turn away, and fly like deer, yet soon again, like deer they wheel round, and return, and stand and gaze upon the danger, until they grow brave once more.

“ I regret to observe that the removal of the moral restraint imposed by the presence of the Mahometan inhabitants, has led to a certain degree of boisterous, though innocent levity, in the bearing of the Christians, and more especially in the demeanor of those who belong to the younger portion of the female population, but I feel assured that a more thorough knowledge of the principles of their own pure religion, will speedily restore these young people to habits of propriety, even more strict than those which were imposed upon them by the authority of their Mahometan brethren.” Bah ! thus you might chaunt, if you chose ; but loving the truth, you will not so disown sweet Bethlehem—you will not disown, nor dissemble the right good hearty delight, with which, in the midst of the arid waste, you found this gushing spring of fresh and joyous girlhood.

CHAPTER XVII.

The Desert.

GAZA is upon the edge of the Desert, to which it stands in the same relation as a sea-port to the sea. It is there that you *character* your camels ("the ships of the Desert"), and lay in your stores for the voyage.

These preparations kept me in the town for some days ; disliking restraint, I declined making myself the guest of the Governor (as it is usual and proper to do), but took up my quarters at the Caravanserai, or "Khan," as they call it in that part of Asia.

Dthemetri had to make the arrangements for my journey, and in order to arm himself with sufficient authority for doing all that was required, he found it necessary to put himself in communication with the Governor. The result of this diplomatic intercourse was that the Governor, with his train of attendants, came to me one day at my Caravanserai, and formally complained that Dthemetri had grossly insulted him. I was shocked at this, for the man was always attentive and civil to me, and I was disgusted at the idea of his having been rewarded with insult. Dthemetri was present when the complaint was made, and I angrily asked him whether it was true that he had really insulted the Governor, and what the deuce he meant by it. This I asked, with the full certainty that Dthemetri, as a matter of course, would deny the charge—would swear that a "wrong construction had been put upon his words, and that nothing was further from his thoughts," &c. &c., after the manner of the parliamentary people, but to my surprise, he very plainly answered that he certainly *had* insulted the Governor, and that rather grossly, but, he said, it was quite necessary to do this, in order to "strike terror, and inspire respect." "Terror and

respect! What on earth do you mean by that nonsense?"—"Yes, but without striking terror, and inspiring respect, he (Dthemetri) would never be able to force on the arrangements for my journey, and Vossignoria would be kept at Gaza for a month!" This would have been awkward, and certainly I could not deny that poor Dthemetri had succeeded in his odd plan of inspiring respect, for at the very time that this explanation was going on in Italian, the Governor seemed more than ever, and more anxiously disposed to overwhelm me with assurances of good will, and proffers of his best services. All this kindness, or promise of kindness, I naturally received with courtesy—a courtesy that greatly perturbed Dthemetri, for he evidently feared that my civility would undo all the good that his insults had achieved.

You will find, I think, that one of the greatest drawbacks to the pleasure of travelling in Asia, is the being obliged more or less to make your way by bullying. It is true that your own lips are not soiled by the utterance of all the mean words that are spoken for you, and that you don't even know of the sham threats, and the false promises, and the vain-glorious boasts put forth by your dragoman; but now and then there happens some incident of the sort which I have just been mentioning, which forces you to believe, or suspect, that your dragoman is habitually fighting your battles for you in a way that you can hardly bear to think of.

A Caravanserai is not ill adapted to the purposes for which it is meant; it forms the four sides of a large quadrangular court. The ground floor is used for warehouses, the first floor for guests, and the open court for the temporary reception of the camels, as well as for the loading and unloading of their burthens, and the transaction of mercantile business generally. The apartments used for the guests are small cells opening into a corridor, which runs round the four sides of the court.

Whilst I lay near the opening of my cell, looking down into the court below, there arrived from the Desert a caravan, that is, a large assemblage of travellers; it consisted chiefly of Moldavian pilgrims, who, to make their good work even more than complete, had begun by visiting the shrine of the Virgin in

Egypt, and were now going on to Jerusalem. They had been overtaken in the Desert by a gale of wind, which so drove the sand, and raised up such mountains before them, that their journey had been terribly perplexed and obstructed, and their provisions (including water, the most precious of all) had been exhausted long before they reached the end of their toilsome march. They were sadly way-worn. The arrival of the caravan drew many and various groups into the court. There was the Moldavian pilgrim with his sable dress, and cap of fur, and heavy masses of bushy hair—the Turk with his various and brilliant garments—the Arab superbly stalking under his striped blanket, that hung like royalty upon his stately form—the jetty Ethiopian in his slavish frock—the sleek, smooth-faced scribe with his comely pelisse, and his silver ink-box stuck in like a dagger at his girdle. And mingled with these were the camels—some standing—some kneeling and being unladen—some twisting round their long necks, and gently stealing the straw from out of their own pack-saddles.

In a couple of days I was ready to start. The way of providing for the passage of the Desert is this: there is an agent in the town who keeps himself in communication with some of the desert Arabs that are hovering within a day's journey of the place; a party of these upon being guaranteed against seizure, or other ill-treatment at the hands of the Governor, come into the town bringing with them the number of camels which you require, and then they stipulate for a certain sum to take you to the place of your destination in a given time; the agreement which they thus enter into, includes a safe-conduct, through their country, as well as the hire of the camels. According to the contract made with me, I was to reach Cairo within ten days from the commencement of the journey. I had four camels, one for my baggage, one for each of my servants, and one for myself. Four Arabs, the owners of the camels, came with me on foot. My stores were a small soldier's tent, two bags of dried bread brought from the convent at Jerusalem, and a couple of bottles of wine from the same source—two goat-skins filled with water, tea, sugar, and cold tongue, and (of all things in the world) a jar of Irish butter, which Mysseri had purchased from

some merchant. There was also a small sack of charcoal, for the greater part of the desert, through which we were to pass, is destitute of fuel.

The camel kneels to receive her load, and for a while she will allow the packing to go on with silent resignation, but when she begins to suspect that her master is putting more than a just burthen upon her poor hump, she turns round her supple neck and looks sadly upon the increasing load, and then gently remonstrates against the wrong with the sigh of a patient wife ; if sighs will not move you, she can weep ; you soon learn to pity, and soon to love her for the sake of her gentle and womanish ways.

You cannot, of course, put an English or any other riding saddle upon the back of the camel, but your quilt, or carpet, or whatever you carry for the purpose of lying on at night, is folded and fastened on the pack-saddle upon the top of the hump, and on this you ride, or rather sit. You sit as a man sits on a chair when he sits astride and faces the back of it. I made an improvement on this plan ; I had my English stirrups strapped on to the cross-bars of the pack-saddle, and thus by gaining rest for my dangling legs, and gaining, too, the power of varying my position more easily than I could otherwise have done, I added very much to my comfort. Don't forget to do as I did.

The camel, like the elephant, is one of the old-fashioned sort of animals that still walk along upon the (now nearly exploded) plan of the ancient beasts that lived before the flood ; she moves forward both her near legs at the same time, and then awkwardly swings round her off shoulder and haunch, so as to repeat the manœuvre on that side ; her pace, therefore, is an odd, disjointed and disjoining sort of movement that is rather disagreeable at first, but you soon grow reconciled to it ; the height to which you are raised is of great advantage to you in passing the burning sands of the desert, for the air at such a distance from the ground is much cooler and more lively than that which circulates beneath.

For several miles beyond Gaza, the land which had been plentifully watered by the rains of the last week, was covered with rich verdure, and thickly jewelled with meadow flowers, so fresh and fragrant that I began to grow almost uneasy—to fancy

that the desert was receding before me, and that the long-desired adventure of passing its "burning sands," was to end in a mere ride across a field. But as I advanced the true character of the country began to display itself with sufficient clearness to dispel my apprehensions, and before the close of my first day's journey I had the gratification of finding that I was surrounded on all sides by a tract of real sand, and had nothing at all to complain of, except that there peeped forth at intervals a few isolated blades of grass, and many of those stunted shrubs which are the accustomed food of the camel.

Before sunset I came up with an encampment of Arabs (the encampment from which my camels had been brought), and my tent was pitched amongst theirs. I was now amongst the true Bedouins; almost every man of this race closely resembles his brethren; almost every man has large and finely formed features, but his face is so thoroughly stripped of flesh, and the white folds from his head-gear fall down by his haggard cheeks, so much in the burial fashion, that he looks quite sad and ghastly: his large dark orbs roll slowly and solemnly over the white of his deep-set eyes—his countenance shows painful thought and long-suffering—the suffering of one fallen from a high estate. His gait is strangely majestic, and he marches along with his simple blanket, as though he were wearing the purple. His common talk is a series of piercing screams and cries,* more painful to the ear than the most excruciating fine music that I ever endured.

The Bedouin women are not treasured up like the wives and daughters of other Orientals, and indeed they seemed almost entirely free from the restraints imposed by jealousy; the feint which they made of concealing their faces from me was always slight; they never, I think, wore the yashmack properly fixed; when they first saw me, they used to hold up a part of their drapery with one hand across their faces, but they seldom persevered very steadily in subjecting me to this privation. Unhappy beings! they were sadly plain. The awful haggardness which

* Milnes cleverly goes to the French for the exact word which conveys the impression produced by the voice of the Arabs, and calls them "*un peuple criard*."

gave something of character to the faces of the men, was sheer ugliness in the poor women. It is a great shame, but the truth is that except when we refer to the beautiful devotion of the mother to her child, all the fine things we say and think about woman, apply only to those who are tolerably good-looking or graceful. These Arab women were so plain and clumsy that they seemed to me to be fit for nothing but another and a better world. They may have been good women enough, so far as relates to the exercise of the minor virtues, but they had so grossly neglected the prime duty of looking pretty in this transitory life, that I could not at all forgive them; they seemed to feel the weight of their guilt and to be truly and humbly penitent. I had the complete command of their affections, for at any moment I could make their young hearts bound, and their old hearts jump, by offering a handful of tobacco, and yet, believe me, it was not in the first soirée that my store of Latakæa was exhausted!

The Bedouin women have no religion; this is partly the cause of their clumsiness; perhaps, if from Christian girls they would learn how to pray, their souls might become more gentle, and their limbs be clothed with grace.

You who are going into their country, have a direct personal interest in knowing something about "Arab hospitality;" but the deuce of it is, that the poor fellows with whom I have happened to pitch my tent were scarcely ever in a condition to exercise that magnanimous virtue with much *éclat*; indeed Mysseri's canteen generally enabled me to outdo my hosts in the matter of entertainment. They were always courteous, however, and were never backward in offering me the "youart," or curds and whey, which is the principal delicacy to be found amongst the wandering tribes.

Practically, I think, Childe Harold would have found it a dreadful bore to make "the desert his dwelling-place," for at all events if he adopted the life of the Arabs, he would have tasted no solitude. The tents are partitioned, not so as to divide the Childe and the "fair spirit," who is his "minister," from the rest of the world, but so as to separate the twenty or thirty brown men that sit screaming in the one compartment, from the

fifty or sixty brown women and children that scream and squeak in the other. If you adopt the Arab life for the sake of seclusion, you will be horribly disappointed, for you will find yourself in perpetual contact with a mass of hot fellow-creatures. It is true that all who are inmates of the same tent are related to each other, but I am not quite sure that that circumstance adds much to the charm of such a life. At all events before you finally determine to become an Arab, try a gentle experiment; take one of those small, shabby houses in May Fair, and shut yourself up in it with forty or fifty shrill cousins for a couple of weeks in July.

In passing the Desert you will find your Arabs wanting to start and to rest at all sorts of odd times; they like, for instance, to be off at one in the morning, and to rest during the whole of the afternoon; you must not give way to their wishes in this respect; I tried their plan once, and found it very harassing and unwholesome. An ordinary tent can give you very little protection against heat, for the fire strikes fiercely through single canvas, and you soon find that whilst you lie crouching, and striving to hide yourself from the blazing face of the sun, his power is harder to bear than it is where you boldly defy him from the airy heights of your camel.

It had been arranged with my Arabs, that they were to bring with them all the food which they would want for themselves during the passage of the Desert, but as we rested at the end of the first day's journey, by the side of an Arab encampment, my camel-men found all that they required for that night in the tents of their own brethren. On the evening of the second day, however, just before we encamped for the night, my four Arabs came to Dthemetri, and formally announced that they had not brought with them one atom of food, and that they looked entirely to my supplies for their daily bread. This was awkward intelligence; we were now just two days deep in the Desert, and I had brought with me no more bread than might be reasonably required for myself, and my European attendants: I believed at the moment (for it seemed likely enough) that the men had really mistaken the terms of the arrangement, and feeling that the bore of being put upon half rations would

be a less evil (and even to myself a less inconvenience) than the starvation of my Arabs, I at once told Dthemetri to assure them that my bread should be equally shared with all. Dthemetri, however, did not approve of this concession ; he assured me quite positively that the Arabs thoroughly understood the agreement, and that if they were now without food, they had wilfully brought themselves into this strait, for the wretched purpose of bettering their bargain, by the value of a few paras' worth of bread. This suggestion made me look at the affair in a new light ; I should have been glad enough to put up with the slight privation to which my concession would subject me, and could have borne to witness the semi-starvation of poor Dthemetri with a fine, philosophical calm, but it seemed to me that the scheme, if scheme it were, had something of audacity in it, and was well enough calculated to try the extent of my softness ; I well knew the danger of allowing such a trial to result in a conclusion that I was one who might be easily managed ; and therefore, after thoroughly satisfying myself from Dthemetri's clear and repeated assertions, that the Arabs had really understood the arrangement, I determined that they should not now violate it by taking advantage of my position in the midst of their big desert, so I desired Dthemetri to tell them that they should touch no bread of mine. We stopped, and the tent was pitched ; the Arabs came to me, and prayed loudly for bread ; I refused them.

“Then we die !”

“God's will be done.”

I gave the Arabs to understand, that I regretted their perishing by hunger, but that I should bear this calmly, like any other misfortune not my own—that in short I was happily resigned to *their* fate. The men would have talked a great deal, but they were under the disadvantage of addressing me through a hostile interpreter ; they looked hard upon my face, but they found no hope there, so at last they retired, as they pretended, to lay them down, and die.

In about ten minutes from this time, I found that the Arabs were busily cooking their bread ! Their pretence of having brought no food was false, and was only invented for the pur-

pose of saving it. They had a good bag of meal which they had contrived to stow away under the baggage, upon one of the camels, in such a way as to escape notice. In Europe the detection of a scheme like this would have occasioned a disagreeable feeling between the master and the delinquent, but you would no more recoil from an Oriental, on account of a matter of this sort, than in England you would reject a horse that had tried, and failed to throw you. Indeed I felt quite good-humoredly towards my Arabs, because they had so woefully failed in their wretched attempt, and because, as it turned out, I had done what was right; they too, poor fellows, evidently began to like me immensely, on account of the hard-heartedness which had enabled me to baffle their scheme.

The Arabs adhere to those ancestral principles of bread-baking which have been sanctioned by the experience of ages. The very first baker of bread that ever lived, must have done his work exactly as the Arab does at this day. He takes some meal and holds it out in the hollow of his hands, whilst his comrade pours over it a few drops of water; he then mashes up the moistened flour into a paste, which he pulls into small pieces, and thrusts into the embers; his way of baking exactly resembles the craft or mystery of roasting chestnuts, as practised by children; there is the same prudence and circumspection in choosing a good berth for the morsel—the same enterprise, and self-sacrificing valor, in pulling it out with the fingers.

The manner of my daily march was this. At about an hour before dawn, I rose, and made the most of about a pint of water which I allowed myself for washing. Then I breakfasted upon tea, and bread. As soon as the beasts were loaded, I mounted my camel, and pressed forward; my poor Arabs being on foot would sometimes moan with fatigue, and pray for rest, but I was anxious to enable them to perform their contract for bringing me to Cairo within the stipulated time, and I did not therefore allow a halt until the evening came. About mid-day, or soon after, Mysseri used to bring up his camel alongside of mine, and supply me with a piece of bread softened in water (for it was dried hard like board), and also (as long as it lasted) with a piece of the tongue; after this there came into my hand (how

well I remember it!) the little tin cup half filled with wine and water.

As long as you are journeying in the interior of the Desert you have no particular point to make for as your resting-place. The endless sands yield nothing but small stunted shrubs—even these fail after the first two or three days, and from that time you pass over broad plains—you pass over newly reared hills—you pass through valleys that the storm of the last week has dug, and the hills and the valleys are sand, sand, sand, still sand, and only sand, and sand, and sand again. The earth is so samely, that your eyes turn towards heaven—towards heaven, I mean, in the sense of sky. You look to the Sun, for he is your task-master, and by him you know the measure of the work that you have done, and the measure of the work that remains for you to do; He comes when you strike your tent in the early morning, and then, for the first hour of the day, as you move forward on your camel, he stands at your near side, and makes you know that the whole day's toil is before you—then for a while and a long while you see him no more, for you are veiled, and shrouded, and dare not look upon the greatness of his glory, but you know where he strides over head, by the touch of his flaming sword. No words are spoken, but your Arabs moan, your camels sigh, your skin glows, your shoulders ache, and for sights you see the pattern and the web of the silk that veils your eyes, and the glare of the outer light. Time labors on—your skin glows, and your shoulders ache, your Arabs moan, your camels sigh, and you see the same pattern in the silk, and the same glare of light beyond, but conquering Time marches on, and by and by the descending Sun has compassed the Heaven, and now softly touches your right arm, and throws your lank shadow over the sand, right along on the way for Persia; then again you look upon his face, for his power is all veiled in his beauty, and the redness of flames has become the redness of roses—the fair, wavy cloud that fled in the morning now comes to his sight once more—comes blushing, yet still comes on—comes burning with blushes, yet hastens, and clings to his side.

Then arrives your time for resting. The world about you is

all your own, and there, where you will, you pitch your solitary tent ; there is no living thing to dispute your choice. When at last the spot had been fixed upon, and we came to a halt, one of the Arabs would touch the chest of my camel, and utter at the same time a peculiar gurgling sound ; the beast instantly understood, and obeyed the sign, and slowly sunk under me till she brought her body to a level with the ground ; then gladly enough I alighted ; the rest of the camels were unloaded, and turned loose to browse upon the shrubs of the Desert, where shrubs there were, or where these failed, to wait for the small quantity of food which was allowed them out of our stores.

My servants, helped by the Arabs, busied themselves in pitching the tent and kindling the fire. Whilst this was doing I used to walk away towards the East, confiding in the print of my foot as a guide for my return. Apart from the cheering voices of my attendants I could better know and feel the loneliness of the Desert. The influence of such scenes, however, was not of a softening kind, but filled me rather with a sort of childish exultation in the self-sufficiency which enabled me to stand thus alone in the wilderness of Asia—a short-lived pride, for wherever man wanders, he still remains tethered by the chain that links him to his kind ; and so when the night closed round me, I began to return—to return as it were to my own gate. Reaching at last some high ground, I could see, and see with delight, the fire of our small encampment, and when, at last, I regained the spot, it seemed to me a very home that had sprung up for me in the midst of these solitudes. My Arabs were busy with their bread,—Mysseri rattling tea-cups,—the little kettle with her odd, old-maidish looks sat humming away old songs about England, and two or three yards from the fire my tent stood prim and tight with open portal, and with welcoming look, like “the old arm chair” of our Lyrist’s “sweet Lady Anne.”

At the beginning of my journey, the night breeze blew coldly ; when that happened, the dry sand was heaped up outside round the skirts of the tent, and so the Wind that everywhere else could sweep as he listed along those dreary plains was forced to turn aside in his course, and make way, as he ought, for the Englishman. Then within my tent, there were heaps of luxu-

ries,—dining rooms, dressing rooms,—libraries, bed rooms, drawing rooms, oratories, all crowded in the space of a hearth rug. The first night, I remember, with my books, and maps about me, I wanted light,—they brought me a taper, and immediately from out of the silent Desert there rushed in a flood of life, unseen before. Monsters of moths of all shapes and hues, that never before perhaps had looked upon the shining of a flame, now madly thronged into my tent, and dashed through the fire of the candle till they fairly extinguished it with their burning limbs. Those who had failed in attaining this martyrdom, suddenly became serious, and clung despondingly to the canvas.

By and by there was brought to me the fragrant tea, and big masses of scorched and scorching toast, that minded me of old Eton days, and the butter that had come all the way to me in this Desert of Asia, from out of that poor, dear, starving Ireland. I feasted like a King,—like four Kings,—like a boy in the fourth form.

When the cold, sullen morning dawned, and my people began to load the camels, I always felt loath to give back to the waste this little spot of ground that had glowed for a while with the cheerfulness of a human dwelling. One by one the cloaks, the saddles, the baggage, the hundred things that strewed the ground, and made it look so familiar—all these were taken away, and laid upon the camels. A speck in the broad tracts of Asia remained still impressed with the mark of patent portmanteaus, and the heels of London boots; the embers of the fire lay black and cold upon the sand, and these were the signs we left.

My tent was spared to the last, but when all else was ready for the start, then came its fall; the pegs were drawn, the canvas shivered, and in less than a minute there was nothing that remained of my genial home but only a pole and a bundle. The encroaching Englishman was off, and instant, upon the fall of the canvas, like an owner, who had waited, and watched, the Genius of the Desert stalked in.

To servants, as I suppose to any other Europeans not much accustomed to amuse themselves by fancy, or memory, it often happens that after a few days' journeying, the loneliness of the desert will become frightfully oppressive. Upon my poor fel-

lows the access of melancholy came heavy, and all at once, as a blow from above; they bent their necks, and bore it as best they could, but their joy was great on the fifth day, when we came to an Oasis called Gatieth, for here we found encamped a caravan (that is an assemblage of travellers) from Cairo. The Orientals living in cities, never pass the Desert, except in this way; many will wait for weeks, and even for months, until a sufficient number of persons can be found ready to undertake the journey at the same time—until the flock of sheep is big enough to fancy itself a match for wolves. They could not, I think, really secure themselves against any serious danger by this contrivance, for though they have arms, they are so little accustomed to use them, and so utterly unorganized, that they never could make good their resistance to robbers of the slightest respectability. It is not of the Bedouins that such travellers are afraid, for the safe-conduct granted by the Chief of the ruling tribe is never, I believe, violated, but it is said that there are deserters and scamps of various sorts who hover about the skirts of the Desert, particularly on the Cairo side, and are anxious to succeed to the property of any poor devils whom they may find more weak and defenceless than themselves.

These people from Cairo professed to be amazed at the ludicrous disproportion between their numerical forces and mine. They could not understand, and they wanted to know by what strange privilege it is that an Englishman with a brace of pistols and a couple of servants rides safely across the Desert, whilst they, the natives of the neighboring cities, are forced to travel in troops, or rather in herds. One of them got a few minutes of private conversation with Dthemetri, and ventured to ask him anxiously, whether the English did not travel under the protection of Evil Demons. I had previously known (from Methley I think, who travelled in Persia) that this notion, so conducive to the safety of our countrymen, is generally prevalent among Orientals; it owes its origin partly to the strong wilfulness of the English gentleman (which not being backed by any visible authority, either civil or military, seems perfectly superhuman to the soft Asiatic), but partly too to the magic of the Banking system, by force of which the wealthy traveller will make all

his journeys, without carrying a handful of coin, and yet when he arrives at a city, will rain down showers of gold. The theory is that the English traveller has committed some sin against God and his conscience, and that for this, the Evil Spirit has hold of him and drives him from his home, like a victim of the old Grecian Furies, and forces him to travel over countries far and strange, and most chiefly over Deserts and desolate places, and to stand upon the sites of cities that once were, and are now no more, and to grope among the tombs of dead men. Often enough there is something of truth in this notion; often enough the wandering Englishman is guilty (if guilt it be) of some pride, or ambition, big or small, imperial or parochial, which being offended has made the lone places more tolerable than ball rooms to him, a sinner.

I can understand the sort of amazement of the Orientals at the scantiness of the retinue with which an Englishman passes the Desert, for I was somewhat struck myself when I saw one of my countrymen making his way across the wilderness in this simple style. At first there was a mere moving speck in the horizon; my party, of course, became all alive with excitement, and there were many surmises; soon it appeared that three laden camels were approaching, and that two of them carried riders; in a little while we saw that one of the riders wore the European dress, and at last the travellers were pronounced to be an English gentleman and his servant; by their side there were a couple, I think, of Arabs on foot, and this was the whole party.

You,—you love sailing,—in returning from a cruise to the English coast, you see often enough a fisherman's humble boat far away from all shores, with an ugly black sky above, and an angry sea beneath,—you watch the grisly old man at the helm, carrying his craft with strange skill through the turmoil of waters, and the boy, supple-limbed, yet weather-worn already, and with steady eyes that look through the blast,—you see him understanding commandments from the jerk of his father's white eyebrow,—now belaying, and now letting go,—now scrunching himself down into mere ballast, or baling out Death with a pipkin. Stale enough is the sight, and yet when

I see it I always stare anew, and with a kind of Titanic exultation, because that a poor boat with the brain of a man, and the hands of a boy on board, can match herself so bravely against black Heaven and Ocean; well, so when you have travelled for days and days, over an Eastern Desert, without meeting the likeness of a human being, and at last see an English shooting-jacket and his servant come listlessly slouching along from out the forward horizon, you stare at the wide unproportion between this slender company, and the boundless plains of sand through which they are keeping their way.

This Englishman, as I afterwards found, was a military man returning to his country from India, and crossing the Desert at this part in order to go through Palestine. As for me, I had come pretty straight from England, and so here we met in the wilderness at about half way from our respective starting points. As we approached each other it became with me a question whether we should speak; I thought it likely that the stranger would accost me, and in the event of his doing so I was quite ready to be as sociable and chatty as I could be, according to my nature, but still I could not think of anything in particular that I had to say to him; of course among civilized people the not having anything to say is no excuse at all for not speaking, but I was shy and indolent, and I felt no great wish to stop and talk like a morning visitor, in the midst of those broad solitudes. The traveller, perhaps, felt as I did, for except that we lifted our hands to our caps and waved our arms in courtesy, we passed each other as if we had passed in Bond Street. Our attendants, however, were not to be cheated of the delight that they felt in speaking to new listeners, and hearing fresh voices once more. The masters, therefore, had no sooner passed each other than their respective servants quietly stopped and entered into conversation. As soon as my camel found her companions were not following her, she caught the social feeling and refused to go on. I felt the absurdity of the situation and determined to accost the stranger, if only to avoid the awkwardness of remaining stuck fast in the Desert, whilst our servants were amusing themselves. When with this intent I turned round my camel, I found that the gallant officer who had passed me by

about thirty or forty yards, was exactly in the same predicament as myself. I put my now willing camel in motion and rode up towards the stranger, who, seeing this, followed my example and came forward to meet me. He was the first to speak; he was much too courteous to address me as if he admitted of the possibility of my wishing to accost him from any feeling of mere sociability, or civilian-like love of vain talk; on the contrary, he at once attributed my advances to a laudable wish of acquiring statistical information, and accordingly, when we got within speaking distance, he said, "I dare say you wish to know how the Plague is going on at Cairo?" and then he went on to say, he regretted that his information did not enable him to give me in numbers a perfectly accurate statement of the daily deaths: he afterwards talked pleasantly enough upon other and less ghastly subjects. I thought him manly and intelligent; a worthy one of the few thousand strong Englishmen to whom the Empire of India is committed.

The night after the meeting with the people of the caravan, Dthemetri, alarmed by their warnings, took upon himself to keep watch all night in the tent; no robbers came except a jackal that poked his nose into my tent from some motive of rational curiosity; Dthemetri did not shoot him for fear of waking me. These brutes swarm in every part of Syria; and there were many of them even in the midst of the void sands, that would seem to give such poor promise of food; I can hardly tell what prey they could be hoping for, unless it were that they might find, now and then, the carcase of some camel that had died on the journey. They do not marshal themselves into great packs like the wild dogs of Eastern cities, but follow their prey in families, like the place-hunters of Europe; their voices are frightfully like to the shouts and cries of human beings; if you lie awake in your tent at night, you are almost continually hearing some hungry family as it sweeps along in full cry; you hear the exulting scream with which the sagacious dam first winds the carrion, and the shrill response of the unanimous cubs as they snuff the tainted air—"Wha! wha! wha! wha! wha! wha!—Whose gift is it in, mamma?"

Once, during this passage, my Arabs lost their way among the

hills of loose sand that surrounded us, but after a while we were lucky enough to recover our right line of march. The same day we fell in with a Sheik, the head of a family, that actually dwells at no great distance from this part of the desert during nine months of the year. The man carried a match-lock, of which he was very proud; we stopped and sat down, and rested awhile for the sake of a little talk; there was much that I should have liked to ask this man, but he could not understand Dthemetri's language, and the process of getting at his knowledge by double interpretation through my Arabs was unsatisfactory. I discovered, however (and my Arabs knew of that fact), that this man and his family lived habitually for nine months of the year, without touching or seeing either bread or water. The stunted shrub growing at intervals through the sand in this part of the desert, is fed by the dews which fall at night, and enables the camel mares to yield a little milk, which furnishes the sole food and drink of their owner and his people. During the other three months (the hottest of the months, I suppose) even this resource fails, and then the Sheik and his people are forced to pass into another district. You would ask me why the man should not remain always in that district which supplies him with water during three months of the year, but I don't know enough of Arab politics to answer the question. The Sheik was not a good specimen of the effect produced by the diet to which he is subjected; he was very small, very spare, and sadly shrivelled—a poor, over-roasted snipe, a mere cinder of a man; I made him sit down by my side, and gave him a piece of bread and a cup of water from out of my goat-skins. This was not very tempting drink to look at, for it had become turbid, and was deeply reddened by some coloring matter contained in the skins, but it kept its sweetness and tasted like a strong decoction of Russia leather. The Sheik sipped this, drop by drop, with ineffable relish, and rolled his eyes solemnly round between every draught, as though the drink were the drink of the Prophet, and had come from the seventh heaven.

An inquiry about distances led to the discovery that this Sheik had never heard of the division of time into hours; my Arabs themselves, I think, were rather surprised at this.

About this part of my journey, I saw the likeness of a fresh-water lake ; I saw, as it seemed, a broad sheet of calm water that stretched far and fair towards the south—stretching deep into winding creeks, and hemmed in by jutting promontories, and shelving smooth off towards the shallow side ; on its bosom the reflected fire of the sun lay playing and seeming to float upon waters deep and still.

Though I knew of the cheat, it was not till the spongy foot of my camel had almost trodden in the seeming waters, that I could undeceive my eyes, for the shore line was quite true and natural. I soon saw the cause of the phantasm. A sheet of water heavily impregnated with salts, had filled this great hollow ; and when dried up by evaporation had left a white saline deposit that exactly marked the space which the waters had covered, and thus sketched a true shore-line. The minute crystals of the salt sparkled in the sun, and so looked like the face of a lake that is calm and smooth.

The pace of the camel is irksome, and makes your shoulders and loins ache from the peculiar way in which you are obliged to suit yourself to the movements of the beast, but you soon of course become inured to this, and after the first two days this way of travelling became so familiar to me, that (poor sleeper as I am) I now and then slumbered for some moments together, on the back of my camel. On the fifth day of my journey the air above lay dead, and all the whole earth that I could reach with my utmost sight and keenest listening, was still and lifeless as some dispeopled and forgotten world, that rolls round and round in the heavens, through wasted floods of light. The sun, growing fiercer and fiercer, shone down more mightily now than ever on me he shone before, and as I drooped my head under his fire and closed my eyes against the glare that surrounded me, I slowly fell asleep, for how many minutes or moments, I cannot tell, but after a while I was gently awakened by a peal of church bells—my native bells—the innocent bells of Marlen, that never before sent forth their music beyond the Blaygon hills ! My first idea naturally was, that I still remained fast under the power of a dream. I roused myself and drew aside the silk that covered my eyes, and plunged my bare face into the light.

Then at least I was well enough wakened, but still those old Marlen bells rung on, not ringing for joy, but properly, prosily, steadily, merrily ringing "for church." After a while the sound died away slowly; it happened that neither I nor any of my party had a watch by which to measure the exact time of its lasting, but it seemed to be that about ten minutes had passed before the bells ceased. I attributed the effect to the great heat of the sun, the perfect dryness of the clear air through which I moved, and the deep stillness of all around me; it seemed to me that these causes, by occasioning a great tension, and consequent susceptibility of the hearing organs, had rendered them liable to tingle under the passing touch of some mere memory, that must have swept across my brain in a moment of sleep. Since my return to England it has been told me that like sounds have been heard at sea, and that the sailor becalmed under a vertical sun in the midst of the wide ocean, has listened in trembling wonder to the chime of his own village bells.

At this time I kept a poor, shabby pretence of a journal, which just enabled me to know the day of the month and the week, according to the European calendar, and when in my tent at night I got out my pocket-book, I found that the day was Sunday, and roughly allowing for the difference of time in this longitude, I concluded that at the moment of my hearing that strange peal, the church-going bells of Marlen must have been actually calling the prim congregation of the parish to morning prayer. The coincidence amused me faintly, but I could not pluck up the least hope that the effect which I had experienced was anything other than an illusion—an illusion liable to be explained (as every illusion is in these days) by some of the philosophers who guess at nature's riddles. It would have been sweeter to believe that my kneeling mother, by some pious enchantment, had asked, and found this spell to rouse me from my scandalous forgetfulness of God's holy day, but my fancy was too weak to carry a faith like that. Indeed, the vale through which the bells of Marlen send their song is a highly respectable vale, and its people (save one, two, or three) are wholly unaddicted to the practice of magical arts.

After the fifth day of my journey, I no longer travelled over

shifting hills, but came upon a dead level—a dead level bed of sand, quite hard, and studded with small shining pebbles.

The heat grew fierce ; there was no valley nor hollow, nor hill, no mound, no shadow of hill nor of mound by which I could mark the way I was making. Hour by hour I advanced, and saw no change—I was still the very centre of a round horizon ; hour by hour I advanced, and still there was the same, and the same, and the same—the same circle of flaming sky—the same circle of sand still glaring with light and fire. Over all the heaven above—over all the earth beneath, there was no visible power that could balk the fierce will of the sun ; “ he rejoiced as a strong man to run a race : his going forth was from the end of the heaven, and his circuit unto the ends of it ; and there was nothing hid from the heat thereof.” From pole to pole, and from the East to the West, he brandished his fiery sceptre as though he had usurped all Heaven and Earth. As he bid the soft Persian in ancient times, so now and fiercely too, he bid me bow down and worship him ; so now in his pride he seemed to command me and say, “Thou shalt have none other gods but me.” I was all alone before him. There were these two pitted together, and face to face—the mighty sun for one, and for the other—this poor, pale, solitary self of mine, that I always carry about with me.

But on the eighth day, and before I had yet turned away from Jehovah for the glittering god of the Persians, there appeared a dark line upon the edge of the forward horizon, and soon the line deepened into a delicate fringe that sparkled here and there as though it were sown with diamonds. There, then, before me were the gardens and the minarets of Egypt, and the mighty works of the Nile, and I (the eternal Ego that I am !)—I had lived to see, and I saw them.

When evening came I was still within the confines of the desert, and my tent was pitched as usual, but one of my Arabs stalked away rapidly towards the West without telling me of the errand on which he was bent. After a while he returned ; he had toiled on a graceful service ; he had travelled all the way on to the border of the living world, and brought me back for token an ear of rice, full, fresh, and green.

The next day I entered upon Egypt, and floated along (for the delight was as the delight of bathing) through green, wavy fields of rice, and pastures fresh and plentiful, and dived into the cold verdure of groves and gardens, and quenched my hot eyes in shade, as though in deep rushing waters.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Cairo and the Plague.*

CAIRO and Plague ! During the whole time of my stay, the Plague was so master of the city, and showed himself so startlingly in every street and every alley, that I can't now affect to dissociate the two ideas.

When coming from the desert, I rode through a village which lies near to the city on the eastern side, there approached me with busy face and earnest gestures, a personage in the Turkish dress ; his long flowing beard gave him rather a majestic look, but his briskness of manner and his visible anxiety to accost me, seemed strange in an Oriental. The man, in fact, was French or of French origin, and his object was to warn me of the Plague and prevent me from entering the city.

Arrêtez-vous, Monsieur, je vous en prie—arrêtez-vous ; il ne faut pas entrer dans la ville ; la Peste y règne partout.

* There is some semblance of bravado in my manner of talking about the Plague. I have been more careful to describe the terrors of other people than my own. The truth is, that during the whole period of my stay at Cairo, I remained thoroughly impressed with a sense of my danger. I may almost say that I lived in perpetual apprehension, for even in sleep, as I fancy, there remained with me some faint notion of the peril with which I was encompassed. But Fear does not necessarily damp the spirits ; on the contrary, it will often operate as an excitement, giving rise to unusual animation, and thus it affected me. If I had not been surrounded at this time by new faces, new scenes, and new sounds, the effect produced upon my mind by one unceasing cause of alarm, may have been very different. As it was, the eagerness with which I pursued my rambles among the wonders of Egypt was sharpened and increased by the sting of the fear of Death. Thus my account of the matter plainly conveys an impression that I remained at Cairo without losing my cheerfulness and buoyancy of spirits. And this is the truth, but it is also true, as I have freely confessed, that my sense of danger during the whole period was lively and continuous.

Oui, je sais,* mais——

Mais, Monsieur, je dis la Peste—la Peste ; c'est de LA PESTE qu'il est question.

Oui, je sais, mais——

Mais, Monsieur, je dis encore LA PESTE—LA PESTE. Je vous conjure de ne pas entrer dans la ville—vous seriez dans une ville empestée.

Oui, je sais, mais——

Mais Monsieur, je dois donc vous avertir tout bonnement que si vous entrez dans la ville, vous serez—enfin vous serez COMPROMIS !†

Oui, je sais, mais——

The Frenchman was at last convinced that it was vain to reason with a mere Englishman who could not understand what it was to be “compromised.” I thanked him most sincerely for his kindly meant warning ; in hot countries it is very unusual indeed for a man to go out in the glare of the sun, and give free advice to a stranger.

When I arrived at Cairo I summoned Osman Effendi, who was, as I knew, the owner of several houses, and would be able to provide me with apartments ; he had no difficulty in doing this, for there was not one European traveller in Cairo besides myself. Poor Osman ! he met me with a sorrowful countenance, for the fear of the Plague sat heavily on his soul ; he seemed as if he felt that he was doing wrong in lending me a resting-place, and he betrayed such a listlessness about temporal matters, as one might look for in a man who believed that his days were numbered. He caught me, too, soon after my arrival, coming out from the public baths,‡ and from that time for-

* *Anglicè* for “je le sais.” These answers of mine as given above, are not meant for specimens of mere French, but of that fine, terse, nervous, *Continental English*, with which I and my compatriots make our way through Europe. This language, by the bye, is one possessing great force and energy, and is not without its literature—a literature of the very highest order. Where will you find more sturdy specimens of downright, honest, and noble English, than in the Duke of Wellington’s “French” despatches ?

† The import of the word “compromised” when used in reference to contagion, is explained in page 2.

‡ It is said, that when a Mussulman finds himself attacked by the Plague,

ward he was sadly afraid of me, for he shared the opinions of Europeans with respect to the effect of contagion.

Osman's history is a curious one. He was a Scotchman born, and when very young, being then a drummer-boy, he landed in Egypt with Mackensie Fraser's force. He was taken prisoner, and according to Mahometan custom, the alternative of Death or the Koran was offered to him; he did not choose Death, and therefore went through the ceremonies which were necessary for turning him into a good Mahometan. But what amused me most in his history was this—that very soon after having embraced Islam, he was obliged in practice to become curious and discriminating in his new faith—to make war upon Mahometan dissenters, and follow the orthodox standard of the Prophet in fierce campaigns against the Wahabees, who are the Unitarians of the Mussulman world. The Wahabees were crushed, and Osman returning home in triumph from his holy wars, began to flourish in the world; he acquired property and became effendi, or gentleman. At the time of my visit to Cairo he seemed to be much respected by his brother Mahometans, and gave pledge of his sincere alienation from Christianity by keeping a couple of wives. He affected the same sort of reserve in mentioning them as is generally shown by Orientals. He invited me, indeed, to see his harem, but he made both his wives bundle out before I was admitted; he felt, as it seemed to me, that neither of them would bear criticism, and I think that this idea, rather than any motive of sincere jealousy, induced him to keep them out of sight. The rooms of the harem reminded me of an English nursery, rather than of a Mahometan paradise. One is apt to judge of a woman before one sees her, by the air of elegance or coarseness with which she surrounds her home; I judged Osman's wives by this test, and condemned them both. But the strangest feature in Osman's character was his inextinguishable nationality. In vain they had brought him

he goes and takes a bath. The couches on which the bathers recline would carry infection, according to the notion of the Europeans. Whenever, therefore, I took the bath at Cairo (except the first time of my doing so) I avoided that part of the luxury which consists in being "put up to dry" upon a kind of bed.

over the seas in early boyhood—in vain had he suffered captivity, conversion, circumcision—in vain they had passed him through fire in their Arabian campaigns—they could not cut away or burn out poor Osman's inborn love of all that was Scotch; in vain men called him Effendi—in vain he swept along in eastern robes—in vain the rival wives adorned his hareem; the joy of his heart still plainly lay in this, that he had three shelves of books, and that the books were thorough-bred Scotch—the Edinburgh this—the Edinburgh that, and above all, I recollect, he prided himself upon the "Edinburgh Cabinet Library."

The fear of the Plague is its forerunner. It is likely enough that at the time of my seeing poor Osman, the deadly taint was beginning to creep through his veins, but it was not till after I left Cairo that he was visibly stricken. He died.

As soon as I had seen all that I wanted to see in Cairo, and in the neighborhood, I wished to make my escape from a city that lay under the terrible curse of the Plague, but Mysseri fell ill in consequence, I believe, of the hardships which he had been suffering in my service; after a while he recovered sufficiently to undertake a journey, but then there was some difficulty in procuring beasts of burden, and it was not till the nineteenth day of my sojourn that I quitted the city.

During all this time the power of the Plague was rapidly increasing. When I first arrived it was said that the daily number of "accidents" by plague, out of a population of about 200,000, did not exceed four or five hundred, but before I went away the deaths were reckoned at twelve hundred a day. I had no means of knowing whether the numbers (given out, as I believe they were, by officials) were at all correct, but I could not help knowing that from day to day the number of the dead was increasing. My quarters were in a street which was one of the chief thoroughfares of the city. The funerals in Cairo take place between day-break and noon, and as I was generally in my rooms during this part of the day, I could form some opinion as to the briskness of the Plague. I don't mean this for a sly insinuation that I got up every morning with the sun. It was not so, but the funerals of most people in decent circumstances at Cairo are attended by singers and howlers, and the

performances of these people woke me in the early morning, and prevented me from remaining in ignorance of what was going on in the street below.

These funerals were very simply conducted. The bier was a shallow wooden tray carried upon a light and weak wooden frame. The tray had, in general, no lid, but the body was more or less hidden from view by a shawl or scarf. The whole was borne upon the shoulders of men who contrived to cut along with their burdens at a great pace. Two or three singers generally preceded the bier; the howlers (who are paid for their vocal labors) followed after, and last of all came such of the dead man's friends and relations as could keep up with such a rapid procession; these, especially the women, would get terribly blown, and would straggle back into the rear; many were fairly "beaten off." I never observed any appearance of mourning in the mourners; the pace was too severe for any solemn affectation of grief.

When first I arrived at Cairo the funerals that daily passed under my windows were many, but still there were frequent and long intervals without a single howl. Every day, however (except one, when I fancied I observed a diminution of funerals), these intervals became less frequent, and shorter, and at last the passing of the howlers from morn to noon was almost incessant. I believe that about one half of the whole people was carried off by this visitation. The Orientals, however, have more quiet fortitude than Europeans under afflictions of this sort, and they never allow the Plague to interfere with their religious usages. I rode one day round the burial ground. The tombs are strewn over a great expanse, among the vast mountains of rubbish (the accumulations of many centuries) which surround the city. The ground, unlike the Turkish "cities of the dead," which are made so beautiful by their dark cypresses, has nothing to sweeten melancholy—nothing to mitigate the odiousness of death. Carnivorous beasts and birds possess the place by night, and now in the fair morning it was all alive with fresh comers—alive with dead. Yet at this very time when the Plague was raging so furiously, and on this very ground which resounded so mournfully with the howls of arriv-

ing funerals, preparations were going on for the religious festival called the Kourban Bairam. Tents were pitched *and swings hung for the amusement of children*—a ghastly holiday ! but the Mahometans take a pride, and a just pride, in following their ancient customs undisturbed by the shadow of death.

I did not hear whilst I was at Cairo that any prayer for a remission of the Plague had been offered up in the mosques. I believe that, however frightful the ravages of the disease may be, the Mahometans refrain from approaching Heaven with their complaints until the Plague has endured for a long space, and then at last they pray God, not that the Plague may cease, but that it may not go to another city !

A good Mussulman seems to take pride in repudiating the European notion that the will of God can be eluded by eluding the touch of a sleeve. When I went to see the Pyramids of Sakkara, I was the guest of a noble old fellow—an Osmanlee, whose soft rolling language it was a luxury to hear, after suffering as I had suffered of late from the shrieking tongue of the Arabs ; this man was aware of the European ideas about contagion, and his first care, therefore, was to assure me that not a single instance of Plague had occurred in his village ; he then inquired as to the progress of the Plague at Cairo—I had but a bad account to give. Up to this time my host had carefully refrained from touching me, out of respect to the European theory of contagion, but as soon as it was made plain that he, and not I, would be the person endangered by contact, he gently laid his hand upon my arm, in order to make me feel sure that the circumstance of my coming from an infected city did not occasion him the least uneasiness. That touch was worthy of Jove.

Very different is the faith and the practice of the Europeans, or rather I mean of the Europeans settled in the East, and commonly called Levantines. When I came to the end of my journey over the desert, I had been so long alone that the prospect of speaking to somebody at Cairo seemed almost a new excitement. I felt a sort of consciousness that I had a little of the wild beast about me, but I was quite in the humor to be charmingly tame, and to be quite engaging in my manners if I

should have an opportunity of holding communion with any of the human race whilst at Cairo. I knew no one in the place, and had no letters of introduction, but I carried letters of credit, and it often happens in places remote from England that those "advices" operate as a sort of introduction, and obtain for the bearer (if disposed to receive them) such ordinary civilities as it may be in the power of the banker to offer.

Very soon after my arrival I went to the house of the Levantine, to whom my credentials were addressed. At his door several persons (all Arabs) were hanging about and keeping guard. It was not till after some delay, and the passing of some communications with those in the interior of the citadel, that I was admitted. At length, however, I was conducted through the court and up a flight of stairs, and finally into the apartment where business was transacted. The room was divided by an excellent, substantial fence of iron bars, and behind this grille the banker had his station. The truth was, that from fear of the plague he had adopted the course usually taken by European residents, and had shut himself up "in strict quarantine,"—that is to say, that he had, as he hoped, cut himself off from all communication with infecting substances. The Europeans long resident in the East, without any, or with scarcely any exception, are firmly convinced that the plague is propagated by contact and by contact only—that if they can but avoid the touch of an infecting substance, they are safe, and if they cannot, they die. This belief induces them to adopt the contrivance of putting themselves in that state of siege which they call "Quarantine." It is a part of their faith that metals and hempen rope, and also, I fancy, one or two other substances will not carry the infection; and they likewise believe that the germ of pestilence which lies in an infected substance, may be destroyed by submersion in water, or by the action of smoke. They therefore guard the doors of their houses with the utmost care against intrusion, and condemn themselves and all the members of their family, including any European servants, to a strict imprisonment within the walls of their dwelling. Their native attendants are not allowed to enter at all, but they make the necessary purchases of provisions, which are hauled up

through one of the windows by means of a rope, and are then soaked in water.

I knew nothing of these mysteries, and was not therefore prepared for the sort of reception which I met with. I advanced to the iron fence, and putting my letter between the bars, politely proffered it to Mr. Banker. Mr. Banker received me with a sad and dejected look, and not "with open arms," or with any arms at all, but with—a pair of tongs!—I placed my letter between the iron fingers which picked it up as if it were a viper, and conveyed it away to be scorched and purified by fire and smoke. I was disgusted at this reception, and at the idea that anything of mine could carry infection to the poor wretch, who stood on the other side of the grille—pale and trembling, and already meet for Death. I looked with something of the Mahometan's feeling upon these little contrivances for eluding Fate; and in this instance at least they were vain; a few more days and the poor money-changer who had strived to guard the days of his life (as though they were coins) with bolts and bars of iron—he was seized by the Plague and he died.

To people entertaining such opinions as these respecting the fatal effect of contact, the narrow and crowded streets of Cairo were terrible as the easy slope that leads to Avernus. The roaring Ocean and the beetling crags owe something of their sublimity to this—that if they be tempted, they can take the warm life of a man. To the contagionist, filled as he is with the dread of final causes, having no faith in Destiny, nor in the fixed will of God, and with none of the devil-may-care indifference which might stand him instead of creeds—to such one, every rag that shivers in the breeze of a Plague-stricken city has this sort of sublimity. If by any terrible ordinance he be forced to venture forth, he sees Death dangling from every sleeve, and as he creeps forward he poises his shuddering limbs between the imminent jacket that is stabbing at his right elbow and the murderous pelisse that threatens to mow him clean down, as it sweeps along on his left. But most of all he dreads that which most of all he should love—the touch of a woman's dress, for mothers and wives hurrying forth on kindly errands from the bedsides of the dying, go slouching along through the streets

more wilfully and less courteously than the men. For a while it may be that the caution of the poor Levantine may enable him to avoid contact, but sooner or later, perhaps, the dreaded chance arrives; that bundle of linen, with the dark tearful eyes at the top of it, that labors along with the voluptuous clumsiness of Grisi—she has touched the poor Levantine with the hem of her sleeve! from that dread moment his peace is gone; his mind for ever hanging upon the fatal touch, invites the blow which he fears; he watches for the symptoms of plague so carefully, that sooner or later they come in truth. The parched mouth is a sign—his mouth *is* parched; the throbbing brain—his brain *does* throb; the rapid pulse—he touches his own wrist (for he dares not ask counsel of any man lest he be deserted), he touches his wrist, and feels how his frightened blood goes galloping out of his heart; there is nothing but the fatal swelling that is wanting to make his sad conviction complete; immediately he has an odd feel under the arm—no pain, but a little straining of the skin; he would to God it were his fancy that were strong enough to give him that sensation; this is the worst of all; it now seems to him that he could be happy and contented with his parched mouth, and his throbbing brain and his rapid pulse, if only he could know that there were no swelling under the left arm; but dares he try?—in a moment of calmness and deliberation he dares not, but when for a while he has writhed under the torture of suspense, a sudden strength of will drives him to seek and know his fate; he touches the gland and finds the skin sane and sound, but under the cuticle there lies a small lump like a pistol bullet that moves as he pushes it. Oh! but is this for all certainty, is this the sentence of death? feel the gland of the other arm; there is not the same lump exactly, yet something a little like it; have not some people glands naturally enlarged?—would to Heaven he were one! So he does for himself the work of the Plague, and when the Angel of Death, thus courted, does indeed and in truth come, he has only to finish that which has been so well begun; he passes his fiery hand over the brain of the victim, and lets him rave for a season, but all chance-wise, of people and things once dear, or of people and things indifferent. Once more the poor fellow is back at his home in fair Provence,

and sees the sun-dial that stood in his childhood's garden—sees part of his mother, and the long-since-forgotten face of that little dead sister—he sees her, he says, on a Sunday morning, for all the church bells are ringing; he looks up and down through the universe, and owns it well piled with bales upon bales of cotton, and cotton eternal—so much so, that he feels—he knows—he swears that he could make that winning hazard, if the billiard table would not slant upwards, and if the cue were a cue worth playing with; but it is not—it's a cue that won't move—his own arm won't move—in short, there's the devil to pay in the brain of the poor Levantine, and, perhaps, the next night but one he becomes the “life and the soul” of some squalling jackal family, who fish him out by the foot from his shallow and sandy grave.

Better fate was mine; by some happy perverseness (occasioned perhaps by my disgust at the notion of being received with a pair of tongs), I took it into my pleasant head that all the European notions about contagion were thoroughly unfounded—that the Plague might be providential, or “epidemic” (as they phrase it), but was not contagious, and that I could not be killed by the touch of a woman's sleeve, nor yet by her blessed breath. I therefore determined that the Plague should not alter my habits and amusements in any one respect. Though I came to this resolve from impulse, I think that I took the course which was in effect the most prudent, for the cheerfulness of spirits which I was thus enabled to retain, discouraged the yellow-winged Angel, and prevented him from taking a shot at me. I however so far respected the opinion of the Europeans, that I avoided touching, when I could do so without privation or inconvenience. This endeavor furnished me with a sort of amusement as I passed through the streets. The usual mode of moving from place to place in the city of Cairo, is upon donkeys, of which great numbers are always in readiness, with donkey-boys attached. I had two who constantly (until one of them died of the Plague) waited at my door upon the chance of being wanted. I found this way of moving about exceedingly pleasant, and never attempted any other. I had only to mount my beast, and tell my donkey boy the point for which I was bound,

and instantly I began to glide on at a capital pace. The streets of Cairo are not paved in any way, but strewed with a dry sandy soil so deadening to sound that the foot-fall of my donkey could scarcely be heard. There is no trottoir, and as you ride through the streets, you mingle with the people on foot; those who are in your way, upon being warned by the shouts of the donkey-boy, move very slightly aside so as to leave you a narrow lane through which you pass at a gallop. In this way you glide on delightfully in the very midst of crowds, without being inconvenienced or stopped for a moment; it seems to you that it is not the donkey but the donkey-boy who wafts you on with his shouts through pleasant groups and air that feels thick with the fragrance of burial spice. "Eh! Sheik,—Eh! Bint,—reggalek—shumalek, &c., &c.—O old man, O virgin, get out of the way on the right—O virgin, O old man, get out of the way on the left,—this Englishman comes, he comes, he comes!" The narrow alley which these shouts cleared for my passage made it possible, though difficult, to go on for a long way without touching a single person, and my endeavors to avoid such contact were a sort of game for me in my loneliness, which was not without interest. If I got through a street without being touched, I won; if I was touched, I lost,—lost a deuce of a stake, according to the theory of the Europeans, but that I deemed to be all nonsense,—I only lost that game, and would certainly win the next.

There is not much in the way of public buildings to admire at Cairo, but I saw one handsome mosque, to which an instructive history is attached. A Hindostanee merchant, having amassed an immense fortune, settled in Cairo, and soon found that his riches in the then state of the political world gave him vast power in the city—power, however, the exercise of which was much restrained by the counteracting influence of other wealthy men. With a view to extinguish every attempt at rivalry the Hindostanee merchant built this magnificent mosque at his own expense; when the work was complete, he invited all the leading men of the city to join him in prayer within the walls of the newly built temple, and he then caused to be massacred all those who were sufficiently influential to cause him

any jealousy or uneasiness—in short, all “the respectable men” of the place; after this he possessed undisputed power in the city, and was greatly revered—he is revered to this day. It seemed to me that there was a touching simplicity in the mode which this man so successfully adopted for gaining the confidence and good will of his fellow-citizens. There seems to be some improbability in the story (though not nearly so gross as it might appear to an European ignorant of the East, for witness Mehemet Ali’s destruction of the Mamelukes, a closely similar act and attended with the like brilliant success*), but even if the story be false, as a mere fact, it is perfectly true as an illustration,—it is a true exposition of the means by which the respect and affection of Orientals may be conciliated.

I ascended one day to the citadel, which commands a superb view of the town. The fanciful and elaborate gilt-work of the many minarets gives a light and florid grace to the city as seen from this height, but before you can look for many seconds at such things, your eyes are drawn westward—drawn westward, and over the Nile, till they rest with a heavy stare upon the massive enormities of the Ghizeh pyramids. I saw within the fortress many yoke of men, all haggard and wo-begone, and a kennel of very fine lions well fed and flourishing; I say *yoke* of men, for the poor fellows were working together in bonds; I say a *kennel* of lions; for the beasts were not enclosed in cages, but simply chained up like dogs.

I went round the Bazaars; it seemed to me that pipes and arms were cheaper here than at Constantinople, and I should advise you therefore if you go to both places to prefer the market of Cairo. I had previously bought several of such things at Constantinople, and did not choose to encumber myself, or to speak more honestly I did not choose to disencumber my purse by making any more purchases. In the open slave-market I saw about fifty girls exposed for sale, but all of them black, or “invisible” brown. A slave agent took me to some rooms in the upper story of the building, and also into several obscure

* Mehemet Ali invited the Mamelukes to a feast, and murdered them in the Banquet Hall.

houses in the neighborhood, with a view to show me some white women. The owners raised various objections to the display of their ware, and well they might, for I had not the least notion of purchasing; some refused on account of the illegality of the proceeding,* and others declared that all transactions of this sort were completely out of the question as long as the Plague was raging. I only succeeded in seeing one white slave who was for sale, but on this one the owner affected to set an immense value, and raised my expectations to a high pitch, by saying that the girl was Circassian, and was "fair as the full Moon." After a good deal of delay, I was at last led into a room, at the farther end of which was that mass of white linen which indicates an Eastern woman; she was bid to uncover her face, and I presently saw that though very far from being good looking according to my notion of beauty, she had not been inaptly described by the man, who compared her to the full Moon, for her large face was perfectly round and perfectly white. Though very young, she was nevertheless extremely fat. She gave me the idea of having been got up for sale—of having been fattened and whitened by medicines, or by some peculiar diet. I was firmly determined not to see any more of her than the face; she was perhaps disgusted at this my virtuous resolve, as well as with my personal appearance—perhaps she saw my distaste and disappointment; perhaps she wished to gain favor with her owner by showing her attachment to his faith; at all events she holloaed out very lustily and very decidedly that "she would not be bought by the Infidel."

Whilst I remained at Cairo, I thought it worth while to see something of the Magicians, who may be considered as it were the descendants of those who contended so stoutly against the superior power of Aaron. I therefore sent for an old man who was held to be the chief of the Magicians, and desired him to show me the wonders of his art. The old man looked and dressed his character exceedingly well; the vast turban, the flowing beard, and the ample robes, were all that one could wish in the way of appearance. The first experiment (a very stale

* It is not strictly lawful to sell *white* slaves to a Christian.

one), which he attempted to perform for me, was that of attempting to show the forms and faces of my absent friends, not to me, but to a boy brought in from the streets for the purpose, and said to be chosen at random. A mangale (pan of burning charcoal) was brought into my room, and the Magician bending over it, sprinkled upon the fire some substances which must have consisted partly of spices, or sweetly burning woods, for immediately a fragrant smoke arose, which curled round the bending form of the Wizard, the while that he pronounced his first incantations; when these were over, the boy was made to sit down, and a common green shade was bound over his brow; then the Wizard took ink, and still continuing his incantations, wrote certain mysterious figures upon the boy's palm, and directed him to rivet his attention to these marks, without looking aside for an instant; again the incantations proceeded, and after a while the boy being seemingly a little agitated, was asked whether he saw anything on the palm of his hand; he declared that he saw a kind of military procession with flags and banners, which he described rather minutely. I was then called upon to name the absent person whose form was to be made visible. I named Keate. You were not at Eton, and I must tell you, therefore, what manner of man it was that I named, though I think you must have some idea of him already, for wherever from utmost Canada to Bundelcund—wherever there was the white-washed wall of an officer's room, or of any other apartment in which English gentlemen are forced to kick their heels, there, likely enough (in the days of his reign), the head of Keate would be seen scratched, or drawn with those various degrees of skill which one observes in the representations of Saints. Anybody without the least notion of drawing could still draw a speaking, nay scolding likeness of Keate. If you had no pencil, you could draw him well enough with a poker, or the leg of a chair, or the smoke of a candle. He was little more (if more at all) than five feet in height, and was not very great in girth, but in this space was concentrated the pluck of ten battalions. He had a really noble voice, which he could modulate with great skill, but he had also the power of quacking like an angry duck, and he almost always adopted this mode of communication

in order to inspire respect; he was a capital scholar, but his ingenuous learning had *not* "softened his manners," and *had* "permitted them to be fierce"—tremendously fierce; he had the most complete command over his temper—I mean over his *good* temper, which he scarcely ever allowed to appear; you could not put him out of humor—that is out of the *ill*-humor which he thought to be fitting for a head master. His red, shaggy eyebrows were so prominent, that he habitually used them as arms and hands, for the purpose of pointing out any object towards which he wished to direct attention; the rest of his features were equally striking in their way, and were all and all his own; he wore a fancy dress, partly resembling the costume of Napoleon, and partly that of a widow-woman. I could not by any possibility have named anybody more decidedly differing in appearance from the rest of the human race.

"Whom do you name?"—"I name John Keate."—"Now, what do you see?" said the Wizard to the boy.—"I see," answered the boy, "I see a fair girl with golden hair, blue eyes, pallid face, rosy lips." *There* was a shot! I shouted out my laughter to the horror of the Wizard, who, perceiving the grossness of his failure, declared that the boy must have known sin (for none but the innocent can see truth), and accordingly kicked him down stairs.

One or two other boys were tried, but none could "see truth;" they all made sadly "bad shots."

Notwithstanding the failure of these experiments, I wished to see what sort of mummerly my Magician would practise if I called upon him to show me some performances of a higher order than those which had been attempted; I therefore entered into a treaty with him, in virtue of which he was to descend with me into the tombs near the Pyramids, and there evoke the Devil. The negotiation lasted some time, for Dthemetri, as in duty bound, tried to beat down the Wizard as much as he could, and the Wizard, on his part, manfully stuck up for his price, declaring that to raise the Devil was really no joke, and insinuating that to do so was an awesome crime. I let Dthemetri have his way in the negotiation, but I felt in reality very indifferent about the sum to be paid, and for this reason, namely, that the

payment (except a very small present, which I might make, or not, as I chose) was to be *contingent on success*. At length the bargain was made, and it was arranged that after a few days to be allowed for preparation, the Wizard should raise the Devil for two pounds ten, play or pay—no Devil, no piastres.

The Wizard failed to keep his appointment. I sent to know why the deuce he had not come to raise the Devil. The truth was, that my Mahomet had gone to the mountain. The Plague had seized him, and he died.

Although the Plague had now spread terrible havoc around him, I did not see very plainly any corresponding change in the look of the streets until the seventh day after my arrival; I then first observed that the city was *silenced*. There were no outward signs of Despair, nor of violent terror, but many of the voices that had swelled the busy hum of men were already hushed in death, and the survivors, so used to scream and screech in their earnestness whenever they bought or sold, now showed an unwonted indifference about the affairs of this world; it was less worth while for men to haggle, and haggle, and crack the sky with noisy bargains, when the Great Commander was there, who could “pay all their debts with the roll of his drum.”

At this time (the year was 1835), I was informed that of twenty-five thousand people at Alexandria, twelve thousand had died already; the Destroyer had come rather later to Cairo, but there was nothing of weariness in his strides. The deaths came faster than ever they befell in the Plague of London, but the calmness of Orientals under such visitations, and the habit of using biers for interment, instead of burying coffins along with the bodies, rendered it practicable to dispose of the Dead in the usual way, without shocking the people by any unaccustomed spectacle of horror. There was no tumbling of bodies into carts, as in the Plague of Florence and the Plague of London; every man, according to his station, was properly buried, and that in the usual way, except that he went to his grave at a more hurried pace than might have been adopted under ordinary circumstances.

The funerals, which poured through the streets, were not the only public evidence of deaths. In Cairo this custom prevails;

at the instant of a man's death (if his property is sufficient to justify the expense), professional howlers are employed; I believe that these persons are brought near to the dying man, when his end appears to be approaching, and the moment that life is gone, they lift up their voices, and send forth a loud wail from the chamber of Death. Thus I knew when my near neighbors died; sometimes the howls were near; sometimes more distant. Once I was awakened in the night by the wail of death in the next house, and another time by a like howl from the house opposite; and there were two or three minutes, I recollect, during which the howl seemed to be actually *running* along the street.

I happened to be rather teased at this time by a sore throat, and I thought it would be well to get it cured, if I could, before I again started on my travels. I therefore inquired for a Frank doctor, and was informed that the only one then at Cairo was a young Bolognese Refugee, who was so poor that he had not been able to take flight, as the other medical men had done. At such a time as this, it was out of the question to *send* for an European physician; a person thus summoned would be sure to suppose that the patient was ill of the Plague, and would decline to come. I therefore rode to the young Doctor's residence: after experiencing some little difficulty in finding where to look for him, I ascended a flight or two of stairs, and knocked at his door. No one came immediately, but after some little delay the Medico himself opened the door and admitted me. I, of course, made him understand that I had come to consult him, but before entering upon my throat grievance, I accepted a chair, and exchanged a sentence or two of common-place conversation. Now, the natural common-place of the city at this season was of a gloomy sort—"Come va la peste?" (how goes the plague?) and this was precisely the question I put. A deep sigh, and the words "Sette cento per giorno, Signor" (seven hundred a day), pronounced in a tone of the deepest sadness and dejection, were the answer I received. The day was not oppressively hot, yet I saw that the Doctor was transpiring profusely, and even the outside surface of the thick shawl dressing-gown, in which he had wrapped himself, appeared to be moist; he was a handsome, pleasant-looking

young fellow, but the deep melancholy of his tone did not tempt me to prolong the conversation, and without farther delay I requested that my throat might be looked at. The Medico held my chin in the usual way, and examined my throat; he then wrote me a prescription, and almost immediately afterwards I bid him farewell, but as he conducted me towards the door I observed an expression of strange and unhappy watchfulness in his rolling eyes. It was not the next day, but the next day but one, if I rightly remember, that I sent to request another interview with my Doctor; in due time Dthemetri, who was my messenger, returned, looking sadly aghast—he had “*met* the Medico,” for so he phrased it, “coming out from his house—in a bier!”

It was of course plain that when the poor Bolognese was looking at my throat, and almost mingling his breath with mine, he was stricken of the Plague. I suppose that the violent sweat in which I found him, had been produced by some medicine which he must have taken in the hope of curing himself. The peculiar rolling of the eyes which I had remarked, is, I believe, to experienced observers, a pretty sure test of the Plague. A Russian acquaintance of mine, speaking from the information of men who had made the Turkish campaigns of 1828 and 1829, told me that by this sign the officers of Sabal-kansky's force were able to make out the Plague-stricken soldiers with a good deal of certainty.

It so happened that most of the people with whom I had anything to do, during my stay at Cairo, were seized with Plague, and all these died. Since I had been for a long time en route before I reached Egypt, and was about to start again for another long journey over the Desert, there were of course many little matters touching my wardrobe, and my travelling equipments, which required to be attended to whilst I remained in the city. It happened so many times that Dthemetri's orders in respect to these matters were frustrated by the deaths of the tradespeople, and others whom he employed, that at last I became quite accustomed to the peculiar manner which he assumed when he prepared to announce a new death to me. The poor fellow naturally supposed that I should feel some uneasiness at hearing of

the "accidents" which happened to persons employed by me, and he therefore communicated their deaths, as though they were the deaths of friends; he would cast down his eyes, and look like a man abashed, and then gently, and with a mournful gesture allow the words, "Morto, Signor," to come through his lips. I don't know how many of such instances occurred, but they were several, and besides these (as I told you before), my banker, my doctor, my landlord, and my magician, all died of the Plague. A lad who acted as a helper in the house which I occupied, lost a brother and a sister within a few hours. Out of my two established donkey-boys one died. I did not hear of any instance in which a plague-stricken patient had recovered.

Going out one morning, I met unexpectedly the scorching breath of the Khamseen wind, and fearing that I should faint under the horrible sensations which it caused, I returned to my rooms. Reflecting, however, that I might have to encounter this wind in the desert, where there would be no possibility of avoiding it, I thought it would be better to brave it once more in the city, and to try whether I could really bear it or not. I therefore mounted my ass, and rode to old Cairo, and along the gardens by the banks of the Nile. The wind was hot to the touch as though it came from a furnace; it blew strongly, but yet with such perfect steadiness, that the trees bending under its force remained fixed in the same curves without perceptibly waving; the whole sky was obscured by a veil of yellowish grey, which shut out the face of the sun. The streets were utterly silent, being indeed almost entirely deserted, and not without cause, for the scorching blast, whilst it fevers the blood, closes up the pores of the skin, and is terribly distressing, therefore, to every animal that encounters it. I returned to my rooms dreadfully ill. My head ached with a burning pain, and my pulse bounded quick, and fitfully, but perhaps (as in the instance of the poor Levantine, whose death I was mentioning), the fear and excitement which I felt in trying my own wrist, may have made my blood flutter the faster.

It is a thoroughly well believed theory, that during the continuance of the Plague, you can't be ill of any other febrile

malady ; an unpleasant privilege that ! for ill I was, and ill of fever, and I anxiously wished that the ailment might turn out to be anything rather than Plague. I had some right to surmise that my illness may have been merely the effect of the hot wind, and this notion was encouraged by the elasticity of my spirits, and by a strong forefeeling that much of my destined life in this world was yet to come, and yet to be fulfilled. That was my instinctive belief, but when I carefully weighed the probabilities on the one side, and on the other, I could not help seeing that the strength of argument was all against me. There was a strong antecedent likelihood *in favor* of my being struck by the same blow, as the rest of the people who had been dying around me. Besides, it occurred to me, that after all, the universal opinion of the Europeans upon a medical question, such as that of contagion, might probably be correct, and *if it were*, I was so thoroughly “compromised,” and especially by the touch and breath of the dying Medico, that I had no right to expect any other fate than that which now seemed to have overtaken me. Balancing as well as I could all the considerations which hope and fear suggested, I slowly and reluctantly came to the conclusion that according to all merely reasonable probability the Plague had come upon me.

You would suppose that this conviction would have induced me to write a few farewell lines to those who were dearest, and that having done that, I should have turned my thoughts towards the world to come. Such however was not the case ; I believe that the prospect of death often brings with it strong anxieties about matters of comparatively trivial import, and certainly with me the whole energy of the mind was directed towards the one petty object of concealing my illness until the latest possible moment—until the delirious stage. I did not believe that either Mysseri, or Dthemetri, who had served me so faithfully in all trials, would have deserted me (as most Europeans are wont to do) when they knew that I was stricken by Plague, but I shrank from the idea of putting them to this test, and I dreaded the consternation which the knowledge of my illness would be sure to occasion.

I was very ill indeed at the moment when my dinner was

served, and my soul sickened at the sight of the food, but I had luckily the habit of dispensing with the attendance of servants during my meal, and as soon as I was left alone, I made a melancholy calculation of the quantity of food which I should have eaten if I had been in my usual health, and filled my plates accordingly, and gave myself salt, and so on, as though I were going to dine ; I then transferred the viands to a piece of the omnipresent "Times" newspaper, and hid them away in a cupboard, for it was not yet night, and I dared not to throw the food into the street until darkness came. I did not at all relish this process of fictitious dining, but at length the cloth was removed, and I gladly reclined on my divan (I would not lie down), with the "Arabian Nights" in my hand.

I had a feeling that tea would be a capital thing for me, but I would not order it until the usual hour. When at last the time came, I drank deep draughts from the fragrant cup. The effect was almost instantaneous. A plenteous sweat burst through my skin, and watered my clothes through and through. I kept myself thickly covered. The hot, tormenting weight which had been loading my brain was slowly heaved away. The fever was extinguished. I felt a new buoyancy of spirits, and an unusual activity of mind. I went into my bed under a load of thick covering, and when the morning came, and I asked myself how I was, I found that I was thoroughly well.

I was very anxious to procure, if possible, some medical advice for Mysseri, whose illness prevented my departure. Every one of the European practising doctors, of whom there had been many, had either died or fled ; it was said, however, that there was an Englishman in the medical service of the Pasha, who quietly remained at his post, but that he never engaged in private practice. I determined to try if I could obtain assistance in this quarter. I did not venture at first, and at such a time as this, to ask him to visit a servant who was prostrate on the bed of sickness, but thinking that I might thus gain an opportunity of persuading him to attend Mysseri, I wrote a note mentioning my own affair of the sore throat, and asking for the benefit of his medical advice ; he instantly followed back my messenger, and was at once shown up into my room ; I entreated

him to stand off, telling him fairly how deeply I was "compromised," and especially by my contact with a person actually ill, and since dead of Plague. The generous fellow, with a good-humored laugh at the terrors of the contagionists, marched straight up to me, and forcibly seized my hand, and shook it with manly violence. I felt grateful indeed, and swelled with fresh pride of race, because that my countryman could carry himself so nobly. He soon cured Mysseri, as well as me, and all this he did from no other motives than the pleasure of doing a kindness, and the delight of braving a danger.

At length the great difficulty* which I had had in procuring beasts for my departure was overcome, and now, too, I was to have the new excitement of travelling on dromedaries. With two of these beasts, and three camels, I gladly wound my way from out of the pest-stricken city. As I passed through the streets, I observed a fanatical-looking elder, who stretched forth his arms, and lifted up his voice in a speech which seemed to have some reference to me; requiring an interpretation, I found that the man had said, "The Pasha seeks camels, and he finds them not—the Englishman says, 'let camels be brought,' and behold—there they are!"

I no sooner breathed the free, wholesome air of the desert, than I felt that a great burthen which I had been scarcely conscious of bearing, was lifted away from my mind. For nearly three weeks I had lived under peril of death; the peril ceased, and not till then did I know how much alarm and anxiety I had really been suffering.

* The difficulty was occasioned by the immense exertions which the Pasha was making to collect camels for military purposes.

CHAPTER XIX.

The Pyramids.

I WENT to see, and to explore the Pyramids.

Familiar to one from the days of early childhood are the forms of the Egyptian Pyramids, and now, as I approached them from the banks of the Nile, I had no print, no picture before me, and yet the old shapes were there; there was no change; they were just as I had always known them. I straightened myself in my stirrups, and strived to persuade my understanding that this was real Egypt, and that those angles which stood up between me and the West were of harder stuff, and more ancient than the paper pyramids of the green portfolio. Yet it was not till I came to the base of the great Pyramid, that reality began to weigh upon my mind. Strange to say, the bigness of the distinct blocks of stone was the first sign by which I attained to feel the immensity of the whole pile. When I came, and trod, and touched with my hands, and climbed, in order that by climbing I might come to the top of one single stone, then, and almost suddenly, a cold sense and understanding of the Pyramid's enormity came down overcasting my brain.

Now try to endure this homely, sick-nursish illustration of the effect produced upon one's mind by the mere vastness of the great Pyramid: when I was very young (between the ages, I believe, of three and five years old), being then of delicate health, I was often in time of night the victim of a strange kind of mental oppression; I lay in my bed perfectly conscious, and with open eyes, but without power to speak, or to move, and all the while my brain was oppressed to distraction by the presence of a single and abstract idea,—the idea of solid Immensity. It seemed to me in my agonies, that the horror of this visitation arose from its coming upon me without form or shape—that the close

presence of the direst monster ever bred in Hell would have been a thousand times more tolerable, than that simple idea of solid size ; my aching mind was fixed, and riveted down upon the mere quality of vastness, vastness, vastness ; and was not permitted to invest with it any particular object. If I could have done so, the torment would have ceased. When at last I was roused from this state of suffering, I could not of course in those days (knowing no verbal metaphysics, and no metaphysics at all, except by the dreadful experience of an abstract idea), I could not of course find words to describe the nature of my sensations, and even now I cannot explain why it is that the forced contemplation of a mere quality, distinct from matter, should be so terrible. Well, now my eyes saw and knew, and my hands and my feet informed my understanding, that there was nothing at all abstract about the great Pyramid,—it was a big triangle, sufficiently concrete, easy to see, and rough to the touch ; it could not, of course, affect me with the peculiar sensation which I have been talking of, but yet there was something akin to that old night-mare agony in the terrible completeness with which a mere mass of masonry could fill and load my mind.

And Time too ; the remoteness of its origin, no less than the enormity of its proportions, screens an Egyptian Pyramid from the easy and familiar contact of our modern minds ; at its base the common Earth ends, and all above is a world—one not created of God,—not seeming to be made by men's hands, but rather, the sheer giant-work of some old dismal age weighing down this younger planet.

Fine sayings ! but the truth seems to be, after all, that the Pyramids are quite of this world ; that they were piled up into the air for the realization of some kingly crotchets about immortality,—some priestly longing for burial fees ; and that as for the building—they were built like coral rocks by swarms of insects,—by swarms of poor Egyptians, who were not only the abject tools and slaves of power, but who also eat onions for the reward of their immortal labors !* The Pyramids are quite of this world.

* Herodotus, in an after age, stood by with his note book, and got, as he thought, the exact returns of all the rations served out.

I of course ascended to the summit of the great Pyramid, and also explored its chambers, but these I need not describe. The first time that I went to the Pyramids of Ghizeh, there were a number of Arabs hanging about in its neighborhood, and wanting to receive presents on various pretences; their Sheik was with them. There was also present an ill looking fellow in soldier's uniform. This man on my departure claimed a reward, on the ground that he had maintained order and decorum amongst the Arabs; his claim was not considered valid by my Dragoman, and was rejected accordingly: my donkey-boys afterwards said they had overheard this fellow propose to the Sheik to put me to death whilst I was in the interior of the great Pyramid, and to share with him the booty; fancy a struggle for life in one of those burial chambers, with acres and acres of solid masonry between oneself and the daylight! I felt exceedingly glad that I had not made the rascal a present.

I visited the very ancient Pyramids of Aboucir and Sakkarā; there are many of these, and of various shapes and sizes, and it struck me that taken together they might be considered as showing the progress and perfection (such as it is) of Pyramidal Architecture. One of the Pyramids at Sakkara is almost a rival for the full grown monster of Ghizeh; others are scarcely more than vast heaps of brick and stone; these last suggested to me the idea that after all the Pyramid is nothing more nor less than a variety of the sepulchral mound so common in most countries (including I believe Hindostan, from whence the Egyptians are supposed to have come). Men accustomed to raise these structures for their dead Kings, or conquerors, would carry the usage with them in their migrations, but arriving in Egypt, and seeing the impossibility of finding earth sufficiently tenacious for a mound, they would approximate as nearly as might be to their ancient custom by raising up a round heap of these stones,—in short, conical pyramids; of these there are several at Sakkara, and the materials of some are thrown together without any order or regularity. The transition from this simple form to that of the square angular pyramid, was easy and natural, and it seemed to me that the gradations through which the style passed from infancy up to its mature enormity, could plainly be traced at Sakkara.

CHAPTER XX.

The Sphinx.

AND near the Pyramids, more wondrous, and more awful than all else in the land of Egypt, there sits the lonely Sphinx. Comely the creature is, but the comeliness is not of this world; the once worshipped beast is a deformity and a monster to this generation, and yet you can see that those lips, so thick and heavy, were fashioned according to some ancient mould of beauty—some mould of beauty now forgotten—forgotten because that Greece drew forth Cytherea from the flashing foam of the Ægean, and in her image created new forms of beauty, and made it a law among men that the short and proudly wreathed lip should stand for the sign and the main condition of loveliness, through all generations to come. Yet still there lives on the race of those who were beautiful in the fashion of the elder world, and Christian girls of Coptic blood, will look on you with the sad, serious gaze, and kiss you your charitable hand with the big, pouting lips of the very Sphinx.

Laugh, and mock if you will at the worship of stone idols, but mark ye this, ye breakers of images, that in one regard, the stone idol bears awful semblance of Deity—unchangefulness in the midst of change—the same seeming will and intent for ever and ever inexorable! Upon ancient dynasties of Ethiopian and Egyptian Kings—upon Greek and Roman, upon Arab and Ottoman conquerors—upon Napoleon dreaming of an Eastern Empire—upon battle and pestilence—upon the ceaseless misery of the Egyptian race—upon keen-eyed travellers—Herodotus yesterday, and Warburton* to-day—upon all, and more this un-

* Eliot Warburton, who is known to be the author of those brilliantly sparkling papers, the "Episodes of Eastern Travel," which lit up our last November. His book ("The Crescent and the Cross") must, and will be capital.

worldly Sphynx has watched, and watched like a Providence with the same earnest eyes, and the same sad, tranquil mien. And we, we shall die, and Islam will wither away, and the Englishman, leaning far over to hold his loved India, will plant a firm foot on the banks of the Nile, and sit in the seats of the Faithful, and still that sleepless rock will lie watching and watching the works of the new, busy race, with those same sad, earnest eyes, and the same tranquil mien everlasting. You dare not mock at the Sphynx.

CHAPTER XXI.

Cairo to Suez.

THE "Dromedary" of Egypt and Syria, is not the two-humped animal described by that name in books of natural history, but is in fact of the same family as the camel, to which it stands in about the same relation as a racer to a cart-horse. The fleetness and endurance of this creature are extraordinary. It is not usual to force him into a gallop, and I fancy from his make that it would be quite impossible for him to maintain that pace for any length of time, but the animal is on so large a scale that the jog-trot at which he is generally ridden implies a progress of perhaps ten or twelve miles an hour, and this pace, it is said, he can keep up incessantly without food, or water, or rest, for three whole days and nights.

Of the two dromedaries which I had obtained for this journey, I mounted one myself, and put Dthemetri on the other. My plan was, to ride on with Dthemetri to Suez as rapidly as the fleetness of the beasts would allow, and to let Mysseri (who was still weak from the effects of his late illness) come quietly on with the camels and baggage.

The trot of the Dromedary is a pace terribly disagreeable to the rider, until he becomes a little accustomed to it; but after the first half hour I so far schooled myself to this new exercise, that I felt capable of keeping it up (though not without aching limbs) for several hours together. Now, therefore, I was anxious to dart forward, and annihilate at once the whole space that divided me from the Red Sea. Dthemetri, however, could not get on at all; every attempt which he made to trot seemed to threaten the utter dislocation of his whole frame, and indeed I doubt whether any one of Dthemetri's age (nearly forty I think) and unaccustomed to such exercise, could have borne it at all

easily ; besides, the dromedary which fell to his lot was evidently a very bad one ; he every now and then came to a dead stop, and coolly knelt down as though suggesting that the rider had better get off at once, and abandon the attempt as one that was utterly hopeless.

When for the third or fourth time I saw Dthemetri thus planted, I lost my patience, and went on without him. For about two hours, I think, I advanced without once looking behind me. I then paused, and cast my eyes back to the western horizon. There was no sign of Dthemetri, nor of any other living creature. This I expected, for I knew that I must have far out-distanced all my followers. I had ridden away from my party merely by way of gratifying my impatience, and with the intention of stopping as soon as I felt tired, until I was overtaken. I now observed, however (which I had not been able to do whilst advancing so rapidly), that the track which I had been following was seemingly the track of only one or two camels. I did not fear that I had diverged very largely from the true route, but still I could not feel any reasonable certainty, that my party would follow any line of march within sight of me.

I had to consider, therefore, whether I should remain where I was, upon the chance of seeing my people come up, or whether I would push on alone, and find my way to Suez. I had now learned that I could not rely upon the continued guidance of any track, but I knew that (if maps were right) the point for which I was bound bore just due East of Cairo, and I thought that although I might miss the line leading most directly to Suez, I could not well fail to find my way sooner or later to the Red Sea. The worst of it was that I had no provision of food or water with me, and already I was beginning to feel thirst. I deliberated for a minute, and then determined that I would abandon all hope of seeing my party again in the desert, and would push forward as rapidly as possible towards Suez.

It was not, I confess, without a sensation of awe that I swept with my sight the vacant round of the horizon, and remembered that I was all alone and unprovisioned in the midst of the arid waste ; but this very awe gave tone and zest to the exultation with which I felt myself launched. Hitherto, in all my wander-

ings I had been under the care of other people—sailors, Tatars, guides and Dragomen had watched over my welfare, but now at last, I was here in this African desert, and I *myself, and no other, had charge of my life* ; I liked the office well ; I had the greatest part of the day before me, a very fair dromedary, a fur pelisse, and a brace of pistols, but no bread, and no water ; for that I must ride,—and ride I did.

For several hours I urged forward my beast at a rapid, though steady pace, but now the pangs of thirst began to torment me. I did not relax my pace, however, and I had not suffered long, when a moving object appeared in the distance before me. The intervening space was soon traversed, and I found myself approaching a Bedouin Arab mounted on a camel, attended by another Bedouin on foot. They stopped. I saw that, as usual, there hung from the pack-saddle of the camel, a large skin water-flask which seemed to be well filled ; I steered my dromedary close up alongside of the mounted Bedouin, caused my beast to kneel down, then alighted, and keeping the end of the halter in my hand, went up to the mounted Bedouin without speaking, took hold of his water-flask, opened it, and drank long and deep from its leathern lips. Both of the Bedouins stood fast in amazement and mute horror, and really if they had never happened to see an European before, the apparition was enough to startle them. To see for the first time a coat and a waistcoat with the pale semblance of a human head at the top, and for this ghastly figure to come swiftly out of the horizon, upon a fleet dromedary—approach them silently, and with a demoniacal smile, and drink a deep draught from their water-flask—this was enough to make the Bedouins stare a little : they, in fact, stared a great deal—not as Europeans stare, with a restless and puzzled expression of countenance, but with features all fixed, and rigid, and with still, glassy eyes ; before they had time to get decomposed from their state of petrification, I had remounted my dromedary, and was darting away towards the East.

Without pause, or remission of pace, I continued to press forward, but after a while, I found to my confusion, that the slight track, which had hitherto guided me, now failed altogether ; I

began to fear that I must have been all along following the course of some wandering Bedouins, and I felt that if this were the case, my fate was a little uncertain. To comfort myself, I began to nurse up a theory that death by thirst was not so terrible as inexperienced people were apt to imagine. (Say what you will, there *is* comfort in theories; some of the repudiating Americans of the United States entertain a theory that they are distinguishable from common swindlers, and the national pride of the "young Republic" is wholly supported by the indulgence of this singular fancy.)

I had no compass with me, but I determined upon the eastern point of the horizon as accurately as I could, by reference to the sun, and so laid down for myself a way over the pathless sands.

But now my poor dromedary, by whose life and strength I held my own, she began to show signs of distress; a thick, clammy, and glutinous kind of foam gathered about her lips, and piteous sobs burst from her bosom in the tones of human misery; I doubted for a moment, whether I would give her a little rest, or relaxation of pace, but I decided that I would not, and continued to push forward as steadily as before.

The character of the country became changed; I had ridden away from the level tracts, and before me now, and on either side, there were vast hills of sand, and calcined rocks that interrupted my progress, and baffled my doubtful road, but I did my best; with rapid steps I swept round the base of the hills, threaded the winding hollows, and at last, as I rose in my swift course to the crest of a lofty ridge, *Thalatta! Thalatta!* by *Jove!* I saw the Sea!

My tongue can tell where to find the clue to many an old pagan creed, because that (distinctly from all mere admiration of the beauty belonging to Nature's works) I acknowledge a sense of mystical reverence, when first I look to see some illustrious feature of the globe—some coast-line of Ocean—some mighty river or dreary mountain range, the ancient barrier of kingdoms. But the Red Sea! It might well claim my earnest gaze by force of the great Jewish migration which connects it with the history of our own Religion. From this very ridge, it is likely enough, the panting Israelites first saw that shining inlet of the sea. *Ay!*

ay ! but moreover, and best of all, that beckoning Sea assured my eyes, and proved how well I had marked out the East for my path, and gave me good promise that sooner or later the time would come for me to rest and drink. It was distant, the Sea, but I felt my own strength, and I had *heard* of the strength of dromedaries. I pushed forward as eagerly as though I had spoiled the Egyptians, and were flying from Pharaoh's police.

I had not yet been able to discover any symptoms of Suez, but after a while I descried in the distance a large, blank, isolated building ; I made towards this, and in time got down to it. The building was a fort, and had been built there for the protection of a well, which it contained within its precincts. A cluster of small huts adhered to the fort, and in a short time I was receiving the hospitality of the inhabitants who were grouped upon the sands near their hamlet. To quench the fires of my throat with about a gallon of muddy water, and to swallow a little of the food placed before me, was the work of few minutes, and before the astonishment of my hosts had even begun to subside, I was pursuing my onward journey. Suez, I found, was still three hours distant, and the Sun going down in the West warned me that I must find some other guide to keep me in the right direction. This guide I found in the most fickle and uncertain of the elements. For some hours the wind had been freshening, and it now blew a violent gale ; it blew not fitfully, and in squalls, but with such remarkable steadiness that I felt convinced it would come from the same quarter for several hours. When the Sun set, therefore, I carefully looked for the point from which the wind was blowing, and found that it came from the very West, and was blowing exactly in the direction of my route. I had nothing to do therefore but to go straight to leeward, and this was not difficult, for the gale blew with such immense force that if I diverged at all from its line I instantly felt the pressure of the blast on the side towards which I was deviating. Very soon after sun-set there came on complete darkness, but the strong wind guided me well, and sped me, too, on my way.

I had pushed on for about, I think, a couple of hours after night-fall, when I saw the glimmer of a light in the distance, and

this I ventured to hope must be Suez. Upon approaching it, however, I found that it was only a solitary fort, and I passed on without stopping.

On I went, still riding down the wind, when an unlucky accident occurred, for which, if you like, you can have your laugh against me. I have told you already what sort of lodging it is which you have upon the back of a camel. You ride the dromedary in the same fashion ; you are perched rather than seated upon a bunch of carpets or quilts upon the summit of the hump. It happened that my dromedary veered rather suddenly from her onward course ; meeting the movement, I mechanically turned my left wrist as though I were holding a bridle rein, for the complete darkness prevented my eyes from reminding me that I had nothing but a halter in my hand ; the expected resistance failed, for the halter was hanging upon that side of the dromedary's neck towards which I was slightly leaning ; I toppled over, head foremost, and then went falling and falling through air till my crown came whang against the ground. And the ground too was perfectly hard (compacted sand), but the thickly wadded head-gear which I wore for protection against the sun saved my life. The notion of my being able to get up again after falling head-foremost from such an immense height seemed to me at first too paradoxical to be acted upon, but I soon found that I was not a bit hurt. My dromedary utterly vanished ; I looked round me and saw the glimmer of a light in the fort which I had lately passed, and I began to work my way back in that direction. The violence of the gale made it hard for me to force my way towards the West, but I succeeded at last in regaining the fort. To this, as to the other fort which I had passed, there was attached a cluster of huts, and I soon found myself surrounded by a group of villanous, gloomy-looking fellows. It was a horrid bore for me to have to swagger and look big at a time when I felt so particularly small on account of my tumble, and my lost dromedary, but there was no help for it ; I had no Dthemetri now to "strike terror" for me. I knew hardly one word of Arabic, but somehow or other I contrived to announce it as my absolute will and pleasure that these fellows should find me the means of gaining Suez. They acceded, and having a

donkey, they saddled it for me, and appointed one of their number to attend me on foot.

I afterwards found that these fellows were not Arabs, but Algerine refugees, and that they bore the character of being sad scoundrels. They justified this imputation to some extent on the following day. They allowed Mysseri with my baggage, and the camels, to pass unmolested, but an Arab lad belonging to the party happened to lag a little way in the rear, and him (if they were not maligned) these rascals stripped and robbed. Low indeed is the state of bandit morality, when men will allow the sleek traveller with well laden camels to pass in quiet, reserving their spirit of enterprise for the tattered turban of a miserable boy.

I reached Suez at last. The British Agent, though roused from his midnight sleep, received me in his home with the utmost kindness and hospitality. Oh! by Jove, how delightful it was to lie on fair sheets, and to dally with sleep, and to wake, and to sleep, and to wake once more, for the sake of sleeping again!

CHAPTER XXII.

Suez.

I WAS hospitably entertained by the British Consul or Agent, as he is there styled; he is the employé of the East India Company, and not of the Home Government. Napoleon, during his stay of five days at Suez, had been the guest of the Consul's father, and I was told that the divan in my apartment had been the bed of the great Commander.

There are two opinions as to the point at which the Israelites passed the Red Sea; one is that they traversed only the very small creek at the Northern extremity of the inlet, and that they entered the bed of the water at the spot on which Suez now stands—the other that they crossed the sea from a point eighteen miles down the coast. The Oxford theologians who, with Milman their Professor,* believe that Jehovah conducted his chosen people without disturbing the order of Nature, adopt the first view, and suppose that the Israelites passed during an ebb tide aided by a violent wind. One among many objections to this supposition is, that the time of a single ebb would not have been sufficient for the passage of that vast multitude of men and beasts, or even for a small fraction of it. Moreover the creek to the north of this point can be compassed in an hour, and in two hours you can make the circuit of the salt marsh over which the sea may have extended in former times; if therefore the Israelites crossed so high up as Suez, the Egyptians, unless infatuated by divine interference, might easily have recovered their stolen goods from the encumbered fugitives, by making a slight detour. The opinion which fixes the point of passage at eighteen miles distance, and from thence right across the Ocean depths to

* See Milman's History of the Jews. 1st Edit. Family Library.

the Eastern side of the sea, is supported by the unanimous tradition of the people, whether Christians or Mussulmans, and is consistent with Holy writ ; “ the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand, *and on their left.*” The Cambridge Mathematicians seem to think that the Israelites were enabled to pass over dry land by adopting a route not usually subject to the influx of the Sea ; this notion is plausible in a merely hydrostatical point of view, and is supposed to have been adopted by most of the fellows of Trinity, but certainly not by Thorp, who is one of the most amiable of their number ; it is difficult to reconcile this theory with the account given in Exodus, unless we can suppose that the words “ sea ” and “ waters ” are there used in a sense implying dry land.

Napoleon, when at Suez, made an attempt to follow the supposed steps of Moses by passing the creek at this point, but it seems, according to the testimony of the people at Suez, that he and his horsemen managed the matter in a way more resembling the failure of the Egyptians, than the success of the Israelites. According to the French account, Napoleon got out of the difficulty by that warrior-like presence of mind which served him so well when the fate of nations depended on the decision of a moment ; he ordered his horsemen to disperse in all directions, in order to multiply the chances of finding shallow water, and was thus enabled to discover a line by which he and his people were extricated. The story told by the people of Suez is very different ; they declare that Napoleon parted from his horse, got thoroughly submerged, and was only fished out by the assistance of the people on shore.

I bathed twice at the point assigned to the passage of the Israelites, and the second time that I did so, I chose the time of low water, and tried to walk across, but I soon found myself out of my depth, or at least in water so deep that I could only advance by swimming.

The dromedary which had bolted into the Desert, was brought into Suez the day after my arrival, but my pelisse and my pistols, which had been attached to the saddle, had disappeared ; these articles were treasures of great importance to me at that time, and I moved the Governor of the town to make all possible

exertions for their recovery ; he acceded to my wishes as well as he could, and very obligingly imprisoned the first seven poor fellows he could lay his hands on.

At first the Governor acted in the matter from no other motive than that of courtesy to an English traveller, but afterwards, and when he saw the value which I set upon the lost property, he pushed his measures with a degree of alacrity and heat, which seemed to show that he felt a personal interest in the matter ; it was supposed either that he expected a large present in the event of succeeding, or that he was striving by all means to trace the property in order that he might lay his hands on it after my departure.

I went out sailing for some hours, and when I returned I was horrified to find that two men had been bastinadoed by order of the Governor, with a view to force them to a confession of their theft. It appeared, however, that there really was good ground for supposing them guilty, since one of the holsters was actually found in their possession. It was said, too (but I could hardly believe it), that whilst one of the men was undergoing the bastinado, his comrade was overheard encouraging him to bear the torment without peaching. Both men, if they had the secret, were resolute in keeping it, and were sent back to their dungeon. I, of course, took care that there should be no repetition of the torture, at least as long as I remained at Suez.

The Governor was a thorough Oriental, and until a comparatively recent period had shared in the old Mahometan feeling of contempt for Europeans. It happened, however, one day that an English gun-brig had appeared off Suez, and sent her boats ashore to take in fresh water. Now fresh water at Suez is a somewhat scarce and precious commodity ; it is kept in tanks, the chief of which is at some distance from the place. Under these circumstances the request for fresh water was refused, or at all events was not complied with. The Captain of the brig was a simple-minded man, with a strongish will, and he at once declared that if his casks were not filled in three hours, he would destroy the whole place. "A great people indeed!" said the Governor—"a wonderful people, the English!" He instantly caused every cask to be filled to the

brim from his own tank, and ever afterwards entertained for the English a degree of affection and respect for which I felt infinitely indebted to the gallant Captain.

The day after the abortive attempt to extract a confession from the prisoners, the Governor, the Consul and I, sat in Council, I know not how long, with a view of prosecuting the search for the stolen goods. The sitting, considered in the light of a criminal investigation, was characteristic of the East. The proceedings began as a matter of course by the Prosecutor's smoking a pipe, and drinking coffee with the Governor, who was Judge, Jury, and Sheriff. I got on very well with him (this was not my first interview), and he gave me the pipe from his lips in testimony of his friendship. I recollect, however, that my prime adviser, thinking me, I suppose, a great deal too shy and retiring in my manner, entreated me to put up my boots, and to soil the Governor's divan, in order to inspire respect, and strike terror. I thought it would be as well for me to retain the right of respecting myself, and that it was not quite necessary for a well received guest to strike any terror at all.

Our deliberations were assisted by the numerous attendants who lined the three sides of the room not occupied by the divan. Any one of these who took it into his head to offer a suggestion, would stand forward, and humble himself before the Governor, and then state his views, which were always more or less attended to.

After a great deal of fruitless planning, the Governor directed that the prisoners should be brought in. I was shocked when they entered, for I was not prepared to see them come *carried* into the room upon the shoulders of others. It had not occurred to me that their battered feet would be too sore to bear the contact of the floor. They persisted in asserting their innocence. The Governor wanted to recur to the torture, but that I prevented, and the men were carried back to their dungeon.

A scheme was now suggested by one of the attendants which seemed to me childishly absurd, but it was nevertheless tried. The plan was to send a man to the prisoners, who was to make them believe that he had obtained entrance into their dungeon upon some other pretence, but that he had in reality come to

treat with them for the purchase of the stolen goods. This shallow expedient of course failed.

The Governor himself had not nominally the power of life and death over the people in his district, but he could if he chose send them to Cairo, and have them hanged there. I proposed therefore that the prisoners should be *threatened* with this fate. The answer of the Governor made me feel rather ashamed of my effeminate suggestion; he said that if I wished it he would willingly threaten them with death, but he also said that if he threatened, *he should execute the threat*.

Thinking at last that nothing was to be gained by keeping the prisoners any longer in confinement, I requested that they might be set free. To this the Governor acceded, though only, as he said, out of favor to me, for he had a strong impression that the men were guilty. I went down to see the prisoners let out with my own eyes. They were very grateful, and fell down to the earth, kissing my boots. I gave them a present to console them for their wounds, and they seemed to be highly delighted.

Although the matter terminated in a manner so satisfactory to the principal sufferers, there were symptoms of some angry excitement in the place; it was said that public opinion was much shocked at the fact that Mahometans had been beaten on account of a loss sustained by a Christian. My journey was to recommence the next day, and it was hinted that if I persevered in my intention of proceeding, the people would have an easy and profitable opportunity of wreaking their vengeance on me. If ever they formed any scheme of the kind, they at all events refrained from any attempt to carry it into effect.

One of the evenings during my stay at Suez was enlivened by a triple wedding. There was a long and slow procession. Some carried torches, and others were thumping drums, and firing pistols. The bridegrooms came last, all walking abreast; my only reason for mentioning the ceremony (which was otherwise uninteresting) is that I scarcely ever in all my life saw any phenomena so ridiculous, as the meekness and gravity of those three young men, whilst being "led to the altar."

CHAPTER XXIII.

Suez to Gaza.

THE route over the Desert from Suez to Gaza is not frequented by merchants, and is seldom passed by a traveller. This part of the country is less uniformly barren than the tracts of shifting sand which lie on the El Arish route. The shrubs on which the camels feed are more frequent, and there are many spots on which the sand is mingled with so much of productive soil as to admit the growth of corn. The Bedouins are driven out of this district during the summer by the total want of water, but before the time for their forced departure arrives, they succeed in raising little crops of barley from these comparatively fertile patches of ground; they bury the fruit of their labors, leaving marks by which, upon their return, they may be able to recognize the spot. The warm dry sand stands them for a safe granary. The country, at the time I passed it (in the month of April), was pretty thickly sprinkled with Bedouins expecting their harvest; several times my tent was pitched along side of their encampments; I have told you already what the impressions were which these people produced upon my mind.

I saw several creatures of the antelope kind in this part of the Desert, and one day my Arabs surprised in her sleep, a young gazelle (for so I call her), and took the darling prisoner. I carried her before me on my camel for the rest of the day, and kept her in my tent all night; I did all I could to coax her, but the trembling beauty refused to touch food, and would not be comforted; whenever she had a seeming opportunity of escaping, she struggled with a violence so painfully disproportioned to her fine, delicate limbs, that I could not continue the cruel attempt to make her my own. In the morning, therefore, I set her free, anticipating some pleasure from seeing the joyous

bound with which, as I thought, she would return to her native freedom. She had been so stupefied, however, by the exciting events of the preceding day and night, and was so puzzled as to the road she should take, that she went off very deliberately, and with an uncertain step. She went away quite sound in limb, but her intellect may have been upset. Never, in all likelihood, had she seen the form of a human being, until the dreadful moment when she woke from her sleep, and found herself in the gripe of an Arab. Then her pitching and tossing journey on the back of a camel, and lastly, a *soirée* with me by candlelight! I should have been glad to know, if I could, that her heart was not utterly broken.

My Arabs were somewhat excited one day by discovering the fresh print of a foot—the foot, as they said, of a lion. I had no conception that the Lord of the forest (better known as a *crest*) ever stalked away from his jungles to make inglorious war in these smooth plains against antelopes and gazelles. I supposed that there must have been some error of interpretation, and that the Arabs meant to speak of a tiger. It appeared, however, that this was not the case; either the Arabs were mistaken, or the noble brute, uncooped and unchained, had but lately crossed my path.

The camels with which I traversed this part of the Desert, were very different in their ways and habits from those which you get on a frequented route. They were never led. There was not the slightest sign of a track in this part of the Desert, but the camels never failed to choose the right line. By the direction taken at starting, they knew, I suppose, the point (some encampment) for which they were to make. There is always a leading camel (generally, I believe, the eldest), who marches foremost and determines the path for the whole party. If it happens that no one of the camels has been accustomed to lead the others, there is very great difficulty in making a start; if you force your beast forward for a moment he will contrive to wheel and draw back, at the same time looking at one of the other camels with an expression and gesture exactly equivalent to “*après vous.*” The responsibility of finding the way is evidently assumed very unwillingly. After some time, however,

it becomes understood that one of the beasts has reluctantly consented to take the lead, and he accordingly advances for that purpose. For a minute or two he goes on with much indecision, taking first one line and then another, but soon, by the aid of some mysterious sense, he discovers the true direction and follows it steadily from morning to night. When once the leadership is established, you cannot by any persuasion, and can scarcely by any force, induce a junior camel to walk one single step in advance of the chosen guide.

On the fifth day I came to an Oasis, called the Wady el Arish, a ravine, or rather a gully, through which during a part of the year there runs a stream of water. On the sides of the gully there were a number of those graceful trees which the Arabs call Tarfa. The channel of the stream was quite dry in the part at which we arrived, but at about half a mile off some water was found, which, though very muddy, was tolerably sweet. This was a happy discovery, for the water which we had brought from the neighborhood of Suez was rapidly putrifying.

The want of foresight is an anomalous part of the Bedouin's character, for it does not result either from recklessness or stupidity. I know of no human being whose body is so thoroughly the slave of mind as that of the Arab. His mental anxieties seem to be for ever torturing every nerve and fibre of his body, and yet with all this exquisite sensitiveness to the suggestions of the mind, he is grossly improvident. I recollect, for instance, that when setting out upon this passage of the Desert, my Arabs, in order to lighten the burthen of their camels, were most anxious that we should take with us only two days' supply of water. They said that by the time that supply was exhausted, we should arrive at a spring which would furnish us for the rest of the journey. My servants very wisely, and with much pertinacity, resisted the adoption of this plan, and took care to have both the large skins well filled. We proceeded, and found no water at all, either at the expected spring, or for many days afterwards, so that nothing but the precaution of my own people saved us from the very severe suffering which we should have endured if we had entered upon the Desert with only a two days'

supply. The Arabs themselves being on foot would have suffered much more than I from the consequences of their improvidence.

This unaccountable want of foresight prevents the Bedouin from appreciating at a distance of eight or ten days the amount of the misery which he entails upon himself at the end of that period. The Bedouin's dread of a city is one of the most painful mental affections that I have ever observed, and yet when the whole breadth of the Desert lies between him and the town to which you are going, he will freely enter into an agreement to *land* you in the city for which you are bound. When, however, after many a day of toil, the distant minarets at length appear, the poor Bedouin relaxes the vigor of his pace—his step becomes faltering and undecided—every moment his uneasiness increases, and at length he fairly sobs aloud, and embracing your knees, implores with the most piteous cries and gestures, that you will dispense with him and his camels and find some other means of entering the city. This, of course, one can't agree to, and the consequence is, that one is obliged to witness and resist the most moving expressions of grief and fond entreaty. I had to go through a most painful scene of this kind when I entered Cairo, and now the horror which these wilder Arabs felt at the notion of entering Gaza led to consequences still more distressing. The dread of cities results partly from a kind of wild instinct which has always characterized the descendants of Ishmael, but partly too, from a well-founded apprehension of ill-treatment. So often it happens that the poor Bedouin, when once jammed in between walls, is seized by the Government authorities for the sake of his camels, that his innate horror of cities becomes really well justified by results.

The Bedouins with whom I performed this journey were wild fellows of the Desert, quite unaccustomed to let out themselves and their beasts for hire, and when they found that by the natural ascendancy of Europeans they were gradually brought down to a state of subserviency to me, or rather to my attendants, they bitterly repented, I believe, of having placed themselves under our control. They were rather difficult fellows to manage, and gave Dthemetri a good deal of trouble, but I liked them all the better for that.

Selim, the chief of the party and the man to whom all our camels belonged, was a fine, wild, stately fellow ; there were, I think, five other Arabs of the party, but when we approached the end of the journey, they, one by one, began to make off towards the neighboring encampments, and by the time that the minarets of Gaza were in sight, Selim, the owner of the camels, was the only one who remained ; he, poor fellow, as we neared the Town, began to discover the same terrors that my Arabs had shown when I entered Cairo. I could not possibly accede to his entreaties and consent to let my baggage be laid down on the bare sands, without any means of having it brought on into the city. So at length when poor Selim had exhausted all his rhetoric of voice and action and tears, he fixed his despairing eyes for a minute upon the cherished beasts that were his only wealth, and then wildly and suddenly dashed away into the farther Desert. I continued my course and reached the city at last, but it was not without immense difficulty that we could constrain the poor camels to pass under the hated shadow of its walls. They were the genuine beasts of the Desert, and it was sad and painful to witness the agony which they suffered when thus they were forced to encounter the fixed habitations of men ; they shrank from the beginning of every high narrow street, as though from the entrance of some horrible cave, or bottomless pit ; they sighed and wept like women. When at last we got them within the court-yard of the Khan, they seemed to be quite broken-hearted, and looked round piteously for their loving master, but no Selim came. I had imagined that he would enter the town secretly by night, in order to carry off those five fine camels, his only wealth in this world, and seemingly the main objects of his affection. But no—his dread of civilisation was too strong ; during the whole of the three days that I remained at Gaza, he failed to show himself, and thus sacrificed, in all probability, not only his camels but the money which I had stipulated to pay him for the passage of the Desert. In order, however, to do all I could towards saving him from this last misfortune, I resorted to a contrivance which is frequently adopted by the Asiatics. I assembled a group of grave and worthy Mussulmans in the court-yard of the Khan, and in their presence paid over the

gold to a Sheik who was accustomed to communicate with the Arabs of the Desert. All present solemnly promised that if ever Selim should come to claim his rights they would bear true witness in his favor.

I saw a great deal of my old friend the Governor of Gaza. He had received orders to send back all persons coming from Egypt, and force them to perform quarantine at El Arish ; he knew so little of quarantine regulations, however, that his dress was actually in contact with mine, whilst he insisted upon the stringency of the orders which he had received. He was induced to make an exception in my favor, and I rewarded him with a musical snuff-box which I had bought at Smyrna, for the purpose of presenting it to any man in authority who might happen to do me an important service. The Governor was immensely delighted with this toy, and took it off to his harem with great exultation ; he soon, however, returned with an altered countenance ; his wives, he said, had got hold of the box, and put it out of order. So short-lived is human happiness in this frail world !

The Governor fancied that he should incur less risk if I remained at Gaza for two or three days more, and he wanted me to become his guest ; I persuaded him, however, that it would be better for him to let me depart at once ; he wanted to add to my baggage a roast lamb, and a quantity of other cumbrous viands, but I escaped with half a horse-load of leaven bread, which was very good of its kind, and proved a most useful present. The air with which the Governor's slaves affected to be almost breaking down under the weight of the gifts which they bore on their shoulders, reminded me of the figures one sees in some of the old pictures.

CHAPTER XXIV.

Gaza to Nablous.

PASSING now once again through Palestine and Syria, I retained the tent which I had used in the Desert, and found that it added very much to my comfort in travelling. Instead of turning out a family from some wretched dwelling, and depriving them of a repose which I was sure not to find for myself, I now, when evening came, pitched my tent upon some smiling spot within a few hundred yards of the village to which I looked for my supplies—that is, for milk and bread, if I had it not with me, and sometimes also for eggs. The worst of it is, that the needful viands are not to be obtained by coin, but only by intimidation. I at first tried the usual agent—money ; Dthemetri, with one or two of my Arabs, went into the village near which I was encamped, and tried to buy the required provisions, offering liberal payment, but he came back empty-handed. I sent him again, but this time he held different language ; he required to see the elders of the place, and threatening dreadful vengeance, directed them upon their responsibility to take care that my tent should be immediately and abundantly supplied. He was obeyed at once, and the provisions which had been refused to me as a purchaser soon arrived, trebled, or quadrupled, when demanded by way of a forced contribution. I quickly found (I think it required two experiments to convince me) that this peremptory method was the only one which could be adopted with success ; it never failed. Of course, however, when the provisions have been actually obtained, you can, if you choose, give money exceeding the value of the provisions to *somebody* ; an English—a thorough-bred English traveller will always do this (though it is contrary to the custom of the country), for the quiet (false quiet though it be) of his own conscience, but so to order the matter,

that the poor fellows who have been forced to contribute, should be the persons to receive the value of their supplies, is not possible ; for a traveller to attempt anything so grossly just as that, would be too outrageous. The truth is, that the usage of the East, in old times, required the people of a village, at their own cost, to supply the wants of travellers, and the ancient custom is now adhered to, not in favor of travellers generally, but in favor of those who are deemed sufficiently powerful to enforce its observance ; if the villagers, therefore, find a man waiving this right to oppress them, and offering coin for that which he is entitled to take without payment, they suppose at once that he is actuated by fear (fear of *them*, poor fellows !) and it is so delightful to them to act upon this flattering assumption, that they will forego the advantage of a good price for their provisions, rather than the rare luxury of refusing for once in their lives to part with their own property.

The practice of intimidation, thus rendered necessary, is utterly hateful to an Englishman ; he finds himself forced to conquer his daily bread by the pompous threats of the Dragoon, his very subsistence, as well as his dignity and personal safety, being made to depend upon his servants assuming a tone of authority which does not at all belong to him. Besides, he can scarcely fail to see, that as he passes through the country, he becomes the innocent cause of much extra injustice—many supernumerary wrongs. This he feels to be especially the case when he travels with relays. To be the owner of a horse or a mule, within reach of an Asiatic potentate, is to lead the life of the hare and the rabbit—hunted down and ferreted out. Too often it happens that the works of the field are stopped in the day time, that the inmates of the cottage are roused from their midnight sleep by the sudden coming of a Government officer, and the poor husbandman, driven by threats and rewarded by curses, if he would not lose sight for ever of his captured beasts, must quit all and follow them ; this is done that the Englishman may travel ; he would make his way more harmlessly if he could, but horses or mules he *must* have, and these are his ways and means.

The town of Nablous is beautiful ; it lies in a valley hemmed

in with olive groves, and its buildings are interspersed with frequent palm-trees. It is said to occupy the site of the ancient Sychem. I know not whether it was there, indeed, that the father of the Jews was accustomed to feed his flocks; but the valley is green and smiling, and is held at this day by a race more brave and beautiful than Jacob's unhappy descendants.

Nablous is the very furnace of Mahometan bigotry, and I believe that only a few months before the time of my going there, it would have been quite unsafe for a man, unless strongly guarded, to show himself to the people of the town in a Frank costume; but since their last insurrection, the Mahomedans of the place had been so far subdued by the severity of Ibrahim Pasha, that they dared not now offer the slightest insult to an European. It was quite plain, however, that the effort with which the men of the old school refrained from expressing their opinion of a hat and a coat, was horribly painful to them; as I walked through the streets and bazaars, a dead silence prevailed; every man suspended his employment, and gazed on me with a fixed, glassy look, which seemed to say, "God is good, but how marvellous and inscrutable are his ways that thus he permits this white-faced dog of a Christian to hunt through the paths of the faithful!"

The insurrection of these people had been more formidable than any other that Ibrahim Pasha had to contend with; he was only able to crush them at last by the assistance of a fellow renowned for his resources in the way of stratagem and cunning, as well as for his knowledge of the country. This personage was no other than Aboo Goosh ("the father of lies")* who was taken out of prison for the purpose. The "father of lies" enabled Ibrahim to hem in the insurrection, and extinguish it; he was rewarded with the Governorship of Jerusalem, which he held when I was there; I recollect, by the bye, that he tried one of his stratagems upon me. I did not go to see him as I ought in courtesy to have done, during my stay at Jerusalem, but I happened to be the owner of a rather handsome amber tchibouk

* This is an appellation, not implying blame, but merit; the "lies" which it purports to affiliate are feints and cunning stratagems rather than the baser kind of falsehoods. The expression in short has nearly the same meaning as the English word "Yorkshireman."

piece which the Governor heard of, and by some means contrived to see ; he sent to me, and dressed up a statement that he would give me a price immensely exceeding the sum which I had given for it. He did not add my *tchibouk* to the rest of his trophies.

There was a small number of Greek Christians resident in Nablous, and over these the Mussulmans held a high hand, not even permitting them to speak to each other in the open streets ; but if the Moslems thus set themselves above the poor Christians of the place, I, or rather my servants, soon took the ascendant over *them*. I recollect that just as we were starting from the place, and at a time when a number of people had gathered together in the main street to see our preparations, Mysseri, being provoked at some piece of perverseness on the part of a true Believer, coolly thrashed him with his horsewhip before the assembled crowd of fanatics. I was much annoyed at the time, for I thought that the people would probably rise against us. They turned rather pale, but stood still.

The day of my arriving at Nablous was a fête—the new year's day of the Mussulmans.* Most of the people were amusing themselves in the beautiful lawns and shady groves without the city. The men (except myself) were all remotely apart from the other sex. The women in groups were diverting themselves and their children with swings. They were so handsome that they could not keep up their *yashmaks* ; I believe that they had never before looked upon a man in the European dress, and when they now saw in me that strange phenomenon, and saw, too, how they could please the creature by showing him a glimpse of beauty, they seemed to think it was better fun to do this, than to go on playing with swings. It was always, however, with a sort of Zoological expression of countenance that they looked on the horrible monster from Europe, and whenever one of them gave me to see for one sweet instant, the blushing of her unveiled face, it was with the same kind of air as that with which a young, timid girl will edge her way up to an elephant, and tremblingly give him a nut from the tips of her rosy fingers.

* The 29th of April.

CHAPTER XXV.

Mariam.

THERE is no spirit of Propagandism in the Mussulmans of the Ottoman dominions. True it is that a prisoner of War, or a Christian condemned to death, may on some occasions save his life by adopting the religion of Mahomet, but instances of this kind are now exceedingly rare, and are quite at variance with the general system. Many Europeans I think would be surprised to learn that which is nevertheless quite true, namely that an attempt to disturb the religious repose of the Empire by the conversion of a Christian to the Mahometan faith is positively illegal; an incident which occurred at Nablous, and which I am going to mention, showed plainly enough that the unlawfulness of such interference is recognized even in the most bigoted stronghold of Islam.

During my stay at this place I took up my quarters at the house of the Greek Papa, as he is called, that is, the Greek Priest; the priest himself had gone to Jerusalem upon the business I am going to tell you of, but his wife remained at Nablous, and did the honors of her home.

Soon after my arrival, a deputation from the Greek Christians of the place came to request my interference in a matter which had occasioned vast excitement.

And now I must tell you how it came to happen, as it did continually, that people thought it worth while to claim the assistance of a mere traveller who was totally devoid of all just pretensions to authority, or influence of even the humblest description, and especially I must explain to you how it was that the power thus attributed, did really belong to me, or rather to my Dragoman. Successive political convulsions had at length fairly loosed the people of Syria from their former rules of con-

duct, and from all their old habits of reliance. The violence and success with which Mehemet Ali crushed the insurrections of the Mahometan population, had utterly beaten down the head of Islam, and extinguished for the time at least, those virtues and vices which had sprung from the Mahometan Faith. Success so complete as Mehemet Ali's, if it had been attained by an ordinary Asiatic potentate, would have induced a notion of stability. The readily bowing mind of the Oriental would have bowed low and long under the feet of a conqueror whom God had thus strengthened. But Syria was no field for contests strictly Asiatic—Europe was involved, and though the heavy masses of Egyptian troops clinging down with strong gripe upon the land, might seem to hold it fast, yet every peasant practically felt and knew that in Vienna, or Petersburg, or London, there were four or five pale looking men who could pull down the star of the Pasha with shreds of paper and ink. The people of the country knew, too, that Mehemet Ali was strong with the strength of the Europeans,—strong by his French General, his French tactics, and his English engines. Moreover, they saw that the person, the property, and even the dignity of the humblest European was guarded with the most careful solicitude. The consequence of all this was, that the people of Syria looked vaguely, but confidently, to Europe for fresh changes; many would fix upon some nation, France or England, and steadfastly regard it as the arriving sovereign of Syria; those whose minds remained in doubt, equally contributed to this new state of public opinion, which no longer depended upon Religion and ancient habits, but upon bare hopes and fears. Every man wanted to know,—not who was his neighbor, but who was to be his ruler; whose feet he was to kiss, and by whom *his* feet were to be ultimately beaten. Treat your friend, says the proverb, as though he were one day to become your enemy, and your enemy as though he were one day to become your friend. The Syrians went further, and seemed inclined to treat every stranger as though he might one day become their Pasha. Such was the state of circumstances and of feeling which now for the first time had thoroughly opened the mind of Western Asia for the reception of Europeans and European ideas. The credit of the English

especially was so great, that a good Mussulman flying from the conscription, or any other persecution, would come to seek from the formerly despised hat, that protection which the turban could no longer afford, and a man high in authority (as for instance the Governor in command of Gaza) would think that he had won a prize, or at all events a valuable lottery ticket, if he obtained a written approval of his conduct from a simple traveller.

Still, in order that any immediate result should follow from all this unwonted readiness in the Asiatic to succumb to the European, it was necessary that some one should be at hand, who could see, and would push the advantage; I myself had neither the inclination nor the power to do so, but it happened that Dthemetri, who as my Dragoman represented me on all occasions, was the very person of all others best fitted to avail himself with success of this yielding tendency in the Oriental mind. If the chance of birth and fortune had made poor Dthemetri a tailor during some part of his life, yet Religion and the literature of the Church which he served, had made him a Man, and a brave Man, too. The lives of Saints with which he was familiar, were full of heroic actions, which invited imitation, and since faith in a creed involves a faith in its ultimate triumph, Dthemetri was bold from a sense of true strength; his education, too, though not very general in its character, had been carried quite far enough to justify him in pluming himself upon a very decided advantage over the great bulk of the Mahometan population, including the men of authority. With all this consciousness of religious and intellectual superiority, Dthemetri had lived for the most part in countries lying under Mussulman Governments, and had witnessed (perhaps, too, had suffered from) their revolting cruelties; the result was that he abhorred and despised the Mahometan faith, and all who clung to it. And this hate was not of the dry, dull, and inactive sort; Dthemetri was in his sphere a true Crusader, and whenever there appeared a fair opening in the defences of Islam, he was ready and eager to make the assault. These sentiments, backed by a consciousness of understanding the people with whom he had to do, made Dthemetri not only firm and resolute in his constant interviews with men in authority, but sometimes, also (as you

may know already), very violent, and even insulting. This tone, which I always disliked, though I was fain to profit by it, invariably succeeded ; it swept away all resistance ; there was nothing in the then depressed and succumbing mind of the Musulman that could oppose a zeal so warm and fierce.

As for me, I of course stood aloof from Dthemetri's crusades, and did not even render him any active assistance when he was striving (as he almost always was, poor fellow) on my behalf ; I was only the death's head and white sheet with which he scared the enemy ; I think, however, that I played this spectral part exceedingly well, for I seldom appeared at all in any discussion, and whenever I did, I was sure to be pale and calm.

The event which induced the Christians of Nablous to seek for my assistance was this. A beautiful young Christian, between fifteen and sixteen years old, had lately been married to a man of her own creed. About the same time (probably on the occasion of her wedding) she was accidentally seen by a Musulman Sheik of great wealth and local influence, who instantly became madly enamored of her. The strict morality, which so generally prevails where the Mussulmans have complete ascendancy, prevented the Sheik from entertaining any such sinful hopes as an European might have ventured to cherish under the like circumstances, and he saw no chance of gratifying his love, except by inducing the girl to embrace his own creed : if he could induce her to take this step, her marriage with the Christian would be dissolved, and then there would be nothing to prevent him from making her the last, and brightest of his wives. The Sheik was a practical man, and quickly began his attack upon the theological opinions of the bride ; he did not assail her with the eloquence of any Imaums or Mussulman Saints—he did not press upon her the eternal truths of the “Cow,”* or the beautiful morality of the “Table,”*—he sent her no tracts—not even a copy of the holy Koran. An old woman acted as missionary. She brought with her a whole basket full of arguments—jewels, and shawls, and scarfs, and all

* These are the names given by the Prophet to certain chapters of the Koran.

kinds of persuasive finery. Poor Mariam ! she put on the jewels, and took a calm view of the Mahometan Religion in a little hand mirror—she could not be deaf to such eloquent ear-rings, and the great truths of Islam came home to her young bosom in the delicate folds of the Cashmere ; she was ready to abandon her faith.

The Sheik knew very well that his attempt to convert an infidel was illegal, and that his proceedings would not bear investigation, so he took care to pay a large sum to the Governor of Nablous in order to obtain his connivance.

At length Mariam quitted her home, and placed herself under the protection of the Mahometan authorities, who, however, refrained from delivering her into the arms of her lover, and detained her in a mosque until the fact of her real conversion (which had been indignantly denied by her relatives) should be established. For two or three days the mother of the young convert was prevented from communicating with her child by various evasive contrivances, but not, it would seem, by a flat refusal. At length it was announced that the young lady's profession of faith might be heard from her own lips. At an hour appointed, the friends of the Sheik and the relatives of the damsel met in the mosque. The young convert addressed her mother in a loud voice, and said, "God is God, and Mahomet is the Prophet of God, and thou, oh ! my mother, art an infidel feminine dog !"

You would suppose that this declaration, so clearly enounced, and that, too, in a place where Mahometanism is, perhaps, more supreme than in any other part of the Empire, would have sufficed to confirm the pretensions of the lover. This, however, was not the case. The Greek Priest of the place was despatched on a mission to the Governor of Jerusalem (Aboo Goosh) in order to complain against the proceedings of the Sheik, and obtain a restitution of the bride. Meanwhile the Mahometan authorities at Nablous were so conscious of having acted unlawfully, in conspiring to disturb the faith of the beautiful infidel, that they hesitated to take any further step, and the girl was still detained in the mosque.

Thus matters stood when the Christians of the place came and sought to obtain my assistance.

I felt (with regret) that I had no personal interest in the matter, and I also thought that there was no pretence for my interfering with the conflicting claims of the Christian husband, and the Mahometan lover, and I therefore declined to take any step.

My speaking of the husband, by the by, reminds me that he was extremely backward about the great work of recovering his youthful bride. The relations of the girl, who felt themselves disgraced by her conduct, were vehement, and excited to a high pitch, but the Menelaus of Nablous was exceedingly calm and composed.

The fact that it was not technically my duty to interfere in a matter of this kind, was a very sufficient, and yet a very unsatisfactory reason for my refusal of all assistance. Until you are placed in situations of this kind, you can hardly tell how painful it is to refrain from intermeddling in other people's affairs—to refrain from intermeddling when you feel that you can do so with happy effect, and can remove a load of distress by the use of a few small phrases. Upon this occasion, however, an expression fell from one of the girl's kinsmen, which not only determined me against all interference, but made me hope that all attempts to recover the proselyte would fail; this person, speaking with the most savage bitterness, and with the cordial approval of all the other relatives, said that the girl ought to be beaten to death. I could not fail to see that if the poor child were ever restored to her family, she would be treated with the most frightful barbarity; I heartily wished, therefore, that the Mussulmans might be firm, and preserve their young prize from any fate so dreadful as that of a return to her own relations.

The next day the Greek Priest returned from his mission to Aboo Goosh, but the "father of lies," it would seem, had been well plied with the gold of the enamored Sheik, and contrived to put off the prayers of the Christians by cunning feints. Now, therefore, a second and more numerous deputation than the first waited upon me, and implored my intervention with the Governor. I informed the assembled Christians that since their last application I had carefully considered the matter. The religious question I thought might be put aside at once, for the ex-

cessive levity which the girl had displayed proved clearly that, in adopting Mahometanism, she was not quitting any other religion; her mind must have been thoroughly blank upon religious questions, and she was not, therefore, to be treated as a Christian that had strayed from the flock, but rather as a child without any religion at all, who was willing to conform to the usages of those who would deck her with jewels, and clothe her with Cashmere shawls.

So much for the religious part of the question. Well, then, in a merely temporal sense, it appeared to me that (looking merely to the interests of the damsel, for I rather unjustly put poor Menelaus quite out of the question), the advantages were all on the side of the Mahometan match. The Sheik was in a much higher station of life than the superseded husband, and had given the best possible proof of his ardent affection, by the sacrifices which he had made, and the risks which he had incurred for the sake of the beloved object. I therefore stated fairly, to the horror and amazement of all my hearers, that the Sheik, in my view, was likely to make a most capital husband, and that I entirely "approved of the match."

I left Nablous under the impression that Mariam would soon be delivered to her Mussulman lover; I afterwards found, however, that the result was very different. Dthemetri's religious zeal and hate had been so much excited by the account of these events, and by the grief and mortification of his co-religionists, that when he found me firmly determined to decline all interference in the matter, he secretly appealed to the Governor in my name and (using, I suppose, many violent threats, and telling, no doubt, many lies about my station and influence) extorted a promise that the proselyte should be restored to her relatives. I did not understand that the girl had been actually given up whilst I remained at Nablous, but Dthemetri certainly did not desist from his instances until he had satisfied himself by some means or other (for mere words amounted to nothing) that the promise would be actually performed. It was not till I had quitted Syria and when Dthemetri was no longer in my service, that this villainous though well-motived trick of his came to my knowledge; Mysseri, who informed me of the step which had been

taken, did not know it himself until some time after we had quitted Nablous, when Dthemetri exultingly confessed his successful enterprise. I know not whether the engagement which my zealous Dragoman extorted from the Governor was ever complied with. I shudder to think of the fate which must have befallen poor Mariam, if she fell into the hands of her husband.

CHAPTER XXVI.

The Prophet Damoor.

FOR some hours I passed along the shores of the fair Lake of Galilee, and then turning a little to the westward, I struck into a mountainous country, the character of which became more bold and beautiful as I advanced. At length I drew near to Safet, which sits as proud as a fortress upon the summit of a craggy height, and yet because of its minarets, and stately trees, the place looks bright and beautiful. It is one of the holy cities of the Talmud, and according to this authority, the Messiah will reign there forty years before he takes possession of Sion. The sanctity thus attributed to the city renders it a favorite place of retirement for Israelites, of whom it contains four thousand, a number nearly balancing that of the Mahometan inhabitants. I knew by my experience of Tabarieh that a "holy city" was sure to have a population of vermin somewhat proportionate to the number of its Israelites, and I therefore caused my tent to be pitched upon a green spot of ground at a respectful distance from the walls of the town.

When it had become quite dark (for there was no moon that night) I was informed that several Jews had secretly come from the city, in the hope of obtaining some assistance from me in circumstances of imminent danger; I was also informed that they claimed my aid upon the ground that some of their number were British subjects. It was arranged that the two principal men of the party should speak for the rest, and these were accordingly admitted into my tent. One of the two called himself the British Vice-Consul, and he had with him his consular cap, but he frankly said that he could not have dared to assume this emblem of his dignity in the day time, and that nothing but the extreme darkness of the night rendered it safe

for him to put it on upon this occasion. The other of the spokesmen was a Jew of Gibraltar, a tolerably well-bred person, who spoke English very fluently.

These men informed me that the Jews of the place, who were exceedingly wealthy, had lived peaceably in their retirement until the insurrection which took place in 1834, but about the beginning of that year a highly religious Mussulman, called Mohammed Damoor, went forth into the market-place, crying with a loud voice, and prophesying, that on the fifteenth of the following June the true Believers would rise up in just wrath against the Jews, and despoil them of their gold, and their silver, and their jewels. The earnestness of the prophet produced some impression at the time, but all went on as usual, until at last the fifteenth of June arrived. When that day dawned, the whole Mussulman population of the place assembled in the streets, that they might see the result of the prophecy. Suddenly Mohammed Damoor rushed furious into the crowd, and the fierce shout of the prophet soon ensured the fulfilment of his prophecy. Some of the Jews fled, and some remained, but they who fled, and they who remained, alike and unresistingly left their property to the hands of the spoilers. The most odious of all outrages, that of searching the women for the base purpose of discovering such things as gold and silver concealed about their persons, was perpetrated without shame. The poor Jews were so stricken with terror, that they submitted to their fate, even where resistance would have been easy. In several instances a young Mussulman boy, not more than ten or twelve years of age, walked straight into the house of a Jew, and stripped him of his property before his face, and in the presence of his whole family.* When the insurrection was put down, some of the Mussulmans (most probably those who had got no spoil wherewith they might buy immunity) were punished, but the greater part of them escaped; none of the booty was restored, and the pecuniary redress which the Pasha had undertaken to enforce for them, had been hitherto so carefully delayed, that the hope of ever obtaining it had grown very faint. A new Governor

* It was after the interview which I am talking of, and not from the Jews themselves, that I learnt this fact.

had been appointed to the command of the place, with stringent orders to ascertain the real extent of the losses, and to discover the spoilers, with the view of compelling them to make restitution. It was found that, notwithstanding the urgency of the instructions which the Governor had received, he did not push on the affair with the vigor which had been expected; the Jews complained, and either by the protection of the British Consul at Damascus, or by some other means, had influence enough to induce the appointment of a special Commissioner—they called him “the Modeer”—whose duty it was to watch for, and prevent anything like connivance on the part of the Governor, and to push on the investigation with vigor and impartiality.

Such were the instructions with which some few weeks since the Modeer came fraught; the result was that the investigation had made no practical advance, and that the Modeer, as well as the Governor, was living upon terms of affectionate friendship with Mohammed Damoor, and the rest of the principal spoilers.

Thus stood the chances of redress for the past, but the cause of the agonizing excitement under which the Jews of the place now labored, was recent, and justly alarming; Mohammed Damoor had again gone forth into the market-place, and lifted up his voice, and prophesied a second spoliation of the Israelites. This was grave matter; the words of such a practical man as Mohammed Damoor were not to be despised. I fear I must have smiled visibly, for I was greatly amused, and even, I think, gratified at the account of this second prophecy. Nevertheless, my heart warmed towards the poor-oppressed Israelites, and I was flattered too, in the point of my national vanity, at the notion of the far-reaching link, by which a Jew in Syria, who had been born on the rock of Gibraltar, was able to claim me as his fellow-countryman. If I hesitated at all between the “impropriety” of interfering in a matter which was no business of mine, and the “horrid shame” of refusing my aid at such a conjuncture, I soon came to a very ungentlemanly decision—namely, that I would be guilty of the “impropriety,” and not of the “horrid shame.” It seemed to me that the immediate arrest of Mohammed Damoor was the one thing needful to the safety of the Jews, and I felt confident (for reasons which I have

already mentioned in speaking of the Nablous affair) that I should be able to obtain this result by making a formal application to the Governor. I told my applicants that I would take this step on the following morning; they were very grateful, and were for a moment much pleased at the prospect of safety which might thus be opened to them, but the deliberation of a minute entirely altered their views, and filled them with new terror; they declared, that any attempt, or pretended attempt on the part of the Governor to arrest Mohammed Damoor would certainly produce an immediate movement of the whole Musulman population, and a consequent massacre and robbery of the Israelites. My visitors went out, and occupied considerable time, if I rightly remember, in consulting their brethren, but all agreed that their present perilous and painful position was better than the certain and immediate attack which would be made if Mohammed Damoor were seized—that their second estate would be worse than their first. I myself did not think that this would be the case, but I could not, of course, force my aid upon the people against their will, and moreover the day fixed for the fulfilment of this second prophecy was not very close at hand; a little delay, therefore, in providing against the impending danger, would not necessarily be fatal. The men now confessed that although they had come with so much mystery, and as they thought, at so great a risk, to ask my assistance, they were unable to suggest any mode in which I could aid them, except, indeed, by mentioning their grievances to the Consul-general at Damascus. This I promised to do, and this I did.

My visitors were very thankful to me for the readiness which I had shown to intermeddle in their affairs, and the grateful wives of the principal Jews sent to me many compliments, with choice wines, and elaborate sweetmeats.

The course of my travels soon drew me so far from Safet that I never heard how the dreadful day passed off which had been fixed for the accomplishment of the second prophecy. If the predicted spoliation was prevented, poor Mohammed Damoor must have been forced, I suppose, to say that he had prophesied in a metaphorical sense. This would be a sad falling off from the brilliant and substantial success of the first experiment.

CHAPTER XXVII.

Damascus.

For a part of two days I wound under the base of the snow-crowned Djibel el Sheik, and then entered upon a vast and desolate plain, rarely pierced at intervals by some sort of withered stem. The earth in its length and its breadth, and all the deep universe of sky, was steeped in light and heat. On I rode through the fire, but long before evening came, there were straining eyes that saw and joyful voices that announced the sight—of Shaum Shereef—the “Holy,” the “Blessed” Damascus.

But that which at last I reached with my longing eyes, was not a speck in the horizon, gradually expanding to a group of roofs and walls, but a long, low line of blackest green that ran right across in the distance from East to West. And this, as I approached, grew deeper—grew wavy in its outline; soon forest trees shot up before my eyes and robed their broad shoulders so freshly that all the throngs of olives as they rose into view looked sad in their proper dimness. There were even now no houses to see, but only the minarets peered out from the midst of shade into the glowing sky and bravely touched the Sun. There seemed to be here no mere city, but rather a province, wide and rich, that bounded the torrid waste.

Until within a year or two of the time at which I went there, Damascus had kept up so much of the old bigot zeal, against Christians, or rather against Europeans, that no one dressed as a Frank could have dared to show himself in the streets; but the firmness and temper of Mr. Farren, who hoisted his flag in the city as Consul-general for the district, had soon put an end to all intolerance of Englishmen. Damascus was safer than Oxford.* When I entered the city, in my usual dress, there

* An enterprising American traveller, Mr. Everett, lately conceived the

was but one poor fellow that wagged his tongue, and him, in the open streets, Dthemetri horse-whipped. During my stay I went wherever I chose, and attended the public baths without molestation. Indeed my relations with the pleasanter portion of the Mahometan population were upon a much better footing here than at most other places.

In the principal streets of Damascus there is a path for foot passengers, which is raised, I think, a foot or two above the bridle road. Until the arrival of the British Consul-general, none but a Mussulman had been permitted to walk upon the upper way; Mr. Farren would not, of course, suffer that the humiliation of any such exclusion should be submitted to by an Englishman, and I always walked upon the raised path as free and unmolested as if I had been striding through Bond Street; the old usage was, however, maintained with as much strictness as ever against the Christian Rayahs and Jews; not one of them could have set his foot upon the privileged path without endangering his life.

I was lounging one day, I remember, along "the paths of the faithful," when a Christian Rayah from the bridle-road below saluted me with such earnestness, and craved so anxiously to speak, and be spoken to, that he soon brought me to a halt; he had nothing to tell, except only the glory, and exultation with which he saw a fellow Christian stand level with the imperious Mussulmans; perhaps he had been absent from the place for some time, for otherwise I hardly know how it could have happened that my exaltation was the first instance he had seen. His joy was great; so strong and strenuous was England (Lord Palmerston reigned in those days) that it was a pride and de-

bold project of penetrating to the University of Oxford, and this, notwithstanding that he had been in his infancy (they begin very young those Americans) an Unitarian preacher. Having a notion, it seems, that the Ambassadorial character would protect him from insult, he adopted the stratagem of procuring credentials from his government as Minister Plenipotentiary at the Court of her Britannic Majesty; he also wore the exact costume of a Trinitarian, but all his contrivances were vain; Oxford disdained and rejected him (not because he represented a swindling community, but) because that his infantine sermons were strictly remembered against him; the enterprise failed.

light for a Syrian Christian to look up, and say that the Englishman's faith was his too ; if I was vexed at all that I could not give the man a lift, and shake hands with him on level ground, there was no alloy to *his* pleasure ; he followed me on, not looking to his own path, but keeping his eyes on me ; he saw, as he thought, and said (for he came with me on to my quarters) the period of the Mahometan's absolute ascendancy—the beginning of the Christian's. He had so closely associated the insulting privilege of the path with actual dominion, that seeing it now in one instance abandoned, he looked for the quick coming of European troops. His lips only whispered, and that tremulously, but his fiery eyes spoke out their triumph in long and loud hurrahs ! “I, too, am a Christian. My foes are the foes of the English. We are all one people, and Christ is our King.”

If I poorly deserved, yet I liked this claim of brotherhood. Not all the warnings which I heard against their rascality could hinder me from feeling kindly towards my fellow-Christians in the East. English travellers, from a habit perhaps of depreciating sectarians in their own country, are apt to look down upon the Oriental Christians as being “dissenters” from the established religion of a Mahometan Empire. I never did thus. By a natural perversity of disposition, which my nursemaids called *contrairiness*, I felt the more strongly for my creed when I saw it despised among men. I quite tolerated the Christianity of Mahometan countries, notwithstanding its humble aspect, and the damaged character of its followers ; I went further, and extended some sympathy towards those who, with all the claims of superior intellect, learning, and industry, were kept down under the heel of the Mussulmans by reason of their having *our* faith. I heard, as I fancied, the faint echo of an old Crusader's conscience, that whispered, and said, “Common cause !” The impulse was, as you may suppose, much too feeble to bring me into trouble—it merely influenced my actions in a way thoroughly characteristic of this poor sluggish century—that is, by making me speak almost as civilly to the followers of Christ as I did to their Mahometan foes.

This “Holy” Damascus, this “earthly paradise” of the Pro-

phet, so fair to the eyes, that he dared not trust himself to tarry in her blissful shades, she is a city of hidden palaces, of copses, and gardens, and fountains, and bubbling streams. The juice of her life is the gushing and ice-cold torrent that tumbles from the snowy sides of Anti-Lebanon. Close along on the river's edge through seven sweet miles of rustling boughs, and deepest shade, the city spreads out her whole length; as a man falls flat, face forward on the brook, that he may drink, and drink again, so Damascus, thirsting for ever, lies down with her lips to the stream, and clings to its rushing waters.

The chief places of public amusement, or rather, of public relaxation, are the baths, and the great café; this last, which is frequented at night by most of the wealthy men, and by many of the humbler sort, consists of a number of sheds very simply framed, and built in a labyrinth of running streams, which foam and roar on every side. The place is lit up in the simplest manner by numbers of small, pale lamps, strung upon loose cords, and so suspended branch to branch, that the light, though it looks so quiet amongst the darkening foliage, yet leaps and brightly flashes, as it falls upon the troubled waters. All around, and chiefly upon the very edge of the torrents, groups of people are tranquilly seated. They all drink coffee, and inhale the cold fumes of the *narguilè*; they talk rather gently the one to the other, or else are silent. A father will sometimes have two or three of his boys around him, but the joyousness of the Oriental child is all of the sober sort, and never disturbs the reigning calm of the land.

It has been generally understood, I believe, that the houses of Damascus are more sumptuous than those of any other city in the East. Some of these—said to be the most magnificent in the place—I had an opportunity of seeing.

Every rich man's house stands detached from its neighbors, at the side of a garden, and it is from this cause, no doubt, that the city has hitherto escaped destruction. You know some parts of Spain, but you have never, I think, been in Andalusia; if you had, I could easily show you the interior of a Damascene house, by referring you to the Alhambra, or Alcazar of Seville. The lofty rooms are adorned with a rich inlaying of many colors, and

illuminated writing on the walls. The floors are of marble. One side of any room intended for noon-day retirement is generally laid open to a quadrangle, in the centre of which there dances the jet of a fountain. There is no furniture that can interfere with the cool, palace-like emptiness of the apartments. A divan (which is a low and doubly broad sofa) runs round the three walled sides of the room ; a few Persian carpets (which ought to be called Persian rugs, for that is the word which indicates their shape and dimension), are sometimes thrown about near the divan ; they are placed without order, the one partly lapping over the other, and thus disposed, they give to the room an appearance of uncaring luxury ; except these (of which I saw few, for the time was summer and fiercely hot), there is nothing to obstruct the welcome air, and the whole of the marble floor from one divan to the other, and from the head of the chamber across to the murmuring fountain, is thoroughly open and free.

So simple as this is Asiatic luxury !—The Oriental is not a contriving animal—there is nothing intricate in his magnificence. The impossibility of handing down property from father to son, for any long period consecutively, seems to prevent the existence of those traditions by which, with us, the refined modes of applying wealth are made known to its inheritors. We know that in England a newly-made rich man cannot, by taking thought and spending money, obtain even the same-looking furniture as a Gentleman. The complicated character of an English establishment allows room for subtle distinctions between that which is *comme il faut* and that which is not. All such refinements are unknown in the East—the Pasha and the peasant have the same tastes. The broad, cold marble floor—the simple couch—the air freshly waving through a shady chamber—a verse of the Koran emblazoned on the walls—the sight and the sound of falling water—the cold, fragrant smoke of the narguilè, and a small collection of wives and children in the inner apartments—all these, the utmost enjoyments of the grandee, are yet such as to be appreciable by the humblest Mussulman in the empire.

But its gardens are the delight—the delight and the pride of Damascus ; they are not the formal parterres which you might expect from the Oriental taste ; they rather bring back to your

mind the memory of some dark old shrubbery in our northern isle, that has been charmingly "*un-kept up*" for many and many a day. When you see a rich wilderness of wood in decent England, it is like enough that you see it with some soft regrets. The puzzled old woman at the lodge can give small account of "The family." She thinks it is "Italy" that has made the whole circle of her world so gloomy and sad. You avoid the house in lively dread of a lone housekeeper, but you make your way on by the stables; you remember that gable with all its neatly nailed trophies of fitches, and hawks, and owls, now slowly falling to pieces—you remember that stable, and that, but the doors are all fastened that used to be standing ajar—the paint of things painted is blistered and cracked—grass grows in the yard—just there, in October mornings, the keeper would wait with the dogs and the guns—no keeper now—you hurry away, and gain the small wicket that used to open to the touch of a lightsome hand—it is fastened with a padlock (the only new-looking thing), and is stained with thick, green damp—you climb it, and bury yourself in the deep shade, and strive but lazily with the tangling briars, and stop for long minutes to judge and determine whether you will creep beneath the long boughs, and make them your archway, or whether perhaps you will lift your heel, and tread them down under foot. Long doubt, and scarcely to be ended, till you wake from the memory of those days when the path was clear, and chase that phantom of a muslin sleeve that once weighed warm upon your arm.

Wild as that the highest woodland of a deserted home in England, but without its sweet sadness, is the sumptuous garden of Damascus. Forest trees, tall and stately enough if you could see their lofty crests, yet lead a tustling life of it below with their branches struggling against strong numbers of bushes and wilful shrubs. The shade upon the earth is black as night. High, high above your head and on every side all down to the ground, the thicket is hemmed in and choked up by the interlacing boughs that droop with the weight of roses, and load the slow air with their damask breath.* There are no other flow-

* The rose trees which I saw were all of the kind we call "damask;" they grow to an immense height and size.

ers. Here and there, there are patches of ground made clear from the cover, and these are either carelessly planted with some common and useful vegetable, or else are left free to the wayward ways of Nature, and bear rank weeds, moist-looking and cool to your eyes, and freshening the sense with their earthy and bitter fragrance. There is a lane opened through the thicket so broad in some places that you can pass along side by side—in some so narrow (the shrubs are for ever encroaching) that you ought, if you can, to go on the first and hold back the bough of the rose tree. And through this wilderness there tumbles a loud rushing stream which is halted at last in the lowest corner of the garden, and there tossed up in a fountain by the side of the simple alcove. This is all.

Never for an instant will the people of Damascus attempt to separate the idea of bliss from these wild gardens and rushing waters. Even where your best affections are concerned, and you—prudent preachers “hold hard,” and turn aside when they come near the mysteries of the happy state, and we (prudent preachers too), we will hush our voices and never reveal to finite beings the joys of the “Earthly Paradise.”

CHAPTER XXVIII.

Pass of the Lebanon.

“THE ruins of Baalbec !” Shall I scatter the vague, solemn thoughts and all the airy phantasies which gather together when once those words are spoken, that I may give you instead tall columns, and measurements true, and phrases built with ink ?—No, no ; the glorious sounds shall still float on as of yore, and still hold fast upon your brain with their own dim and infinite meaning.

Come ! Baalbec is over ; I got “rather well” out of that.

The pass by which I crossed the Lebanon is like, I think, in its features to one which you must know, namely, that of the Foorca in the Bernese Oberland. For a great part of the way I toiled rather painfully through the dazzling snow, but the labor of ascending added to the excitement with which I looked for the summit of the pass. The time came. There was a minute in the which I saw nothing but the steep white shoulder of the mountain, and there was another minute, and that the next, which showed me a nether Heaven of fleecy clouds that floated along far down in the air beneath me, and showed me beyond the breadth of all Syria west of the Lebanon. But chiefly I clung with my eyes to the dim steadfast line of the sea which closed my utmost view ; I had grown well used of late to the people and the scenes of forlorn Asia—well used to tombs and ruins, to silent cities and deserted plains, to tranquil men and women sadly veiled ; and now that I saw the even plain of the sea, I leapt with an easy leap to its yonder shores, and saw all the kingdoms of the West in that fair path that could lead me from out of this silent land straight on into shrill Marseilles, or round by the pillars of Hercules, to the crash and roar of London. My place upon this dividing barrier was as a man’s

puzzling station in eternity, between the birthless Past and the Future that has no end. Behind me I left an old decrepid World—Religions dead and dying—calm tyrannies expiring in silence—women hushed and swathed, and turned into waxen dolls—Love flown, and in its stead mere Royal and “Paradise” pleasures.—Before me there waited glad bustle and strife,—Love itself, an emulous game,—Religion a Cause and a Controversy, well smitten and well defended,—men governed by reasons and suasion of speech,—wheels going,—steam buzzing,—a mortal race and a slashing pace, and the Devil taking the hindmost,—taking *me*, by Jove (for that was my inner care), if I lingered too long upon the difficult Pass that leads from Thought to Action.

I descended, and went towards the West.

The group of Cedars, remaining on this part of the Lebanon, is held Sacred by the Greek Church, on account of a prevailing notion that the trees were standing at a time when the Temple of Jerusalem was built. They occupy three or four acres on the mountain's side, and many of them are gnarled in a way that implies great age, but except these signs I saw nothing in their appearance or conduct that tended to prove them contemporaries of the cedars employed in Solomon's Temple. The final cause to which these aged survivors owed their preservation, was explained to me in the evening by a glorious old fellow (a Christian Chief), who made me welcome in the valley of Eden. In ancient times, the whole range of the Lebanon had been covered with cedars, but as the fertile plains beneath became more and more infested with Government officers and tyrants of high and low degree, the people by degrees abandoned them, and flocked to the rugged mountains which were less accessible to their indolent oppressors. The cedar forests gradually shrank under the axe of the encroaching multitudes, and seemed at last to be on the point of disappearing entirely, when an aged Chief who ruled in this district, and who had witnessed the great change effected even in his own life-time, chose to say that some sign or memorial should be left of the vast woods with which the mountains had formerly been clad, and commanded accordingly that this group of trees (which was

probably situate at the highest point to which the forest had reached), should remain untouched. The Chief, it seems, was not moved by the notion I have mentioned as prevailing in the Greek Church, but rather by some sentiment of veneration for a great natural feature,—a sentiment akin, perhaps, to that old and earthborn Religion, which made men bow down to Creation before they had yet learnt how to know and worship the Creator.

The Chief of the valley in which I passed the night was a man of large possessions, and he entertained me very sumptuously ; he was highly intelligent, and had had the sagacity to foresee that Europe would intervene authoritatively in the affairs of Syria. Bearing this idea in mind, and with a view to give his son an advantageous start in the ambitious career for which he was destined, he had hired for him a teacher of the Italian language, the only accessible European tongue. The tutor, however, who was a native of Syria, either did not know, or did not choose to teach the European forms of address, but contented himself with instructing his pupil in the mere language of Italy. This circumstance gave me an opportunity (the only one I ever had, or was likely to have),* of hearing the phrases of Oriental courtesy in an European tongue. The boy was about twelve or thirteen years old, and having the advantage of being able to speak to me without the aid of an interpreter, he took a very prominent part in doing the honors of his father's house. He went through his duties with untiring assiduity, and with a kind of gracefulness which can scarcely be conveyed by mere description to those who are unacquainted with the manners of the Asiatics. The boy's address resembled a little that of a highly polished and insinuating Roman Catholic Priest, but had more of girlish gentleness. It was strange to hear him gravely and slowly enunciating the common and extravagant compliments of the East in good Italian, and in soft, persuasive tones ; I recollect that I was particularly amused at the gracious obstinacy with which he maintained that the house in which I was so hospitably entertained, belonged not to his father, but to me ; to say this once, was only to use the common form of speech,

* A Dragoman never interprets in terms the courteous language of the East.

signifying no more than our sweet word "welcome," but the amusing part of the matter was that, whenever in the course of conversation I happened to speak of his father's house or the surrounding domain, the boy invariably interfered to correct my pretended mistake, and to assure me once again with a gentle decisiveness of manner that the whole property was really and exclusively mine, and that his father had not the most distant pretensions to its ownership.

I received from my host much and (as I now know) most true information respecting the people of the mountains, and their power of resisting Mehemet Ali. The Chief gave me very plainly to understand that the Mountaineers being dependent upon others for bread and gunpowder (the two great necessities of martial life), could not long hold out against a power which occupied the plains and commanded the sea, but he also assured me, and that very significantly, that if this source of weakness were provided against, *the Mountaineers were to be depended upon*; he told me that in ten or fifteen days the Chiefs could bring together some fifty thousand fighting men.

CHAPTER XXIX.

Surprise of Satalieh.

WHILST I was remaining upon the coast of Syria, I had the good fortune to become acquainted with the Russian Sataliefsky,* a General Officer, who, in his youth, had fought and bled at Borodino, but was now better known among Diplomats by the important trust committed to him at a period highly critical for the affairs of Eastern Europe; I must not tell you his family name; my mention of his title can do him no harm, for it is I, and I only, who have conferred it in consideration of the military and diplomatic services performed under my own eyes.

The General as well as I was bound for Smyrna, and we agreed to sail together in an Ionian Brigantine. We did not charter the vessel, but we made our arrangement with the captain upon such terms that we could be put ashore upon any part of the coast which we might think proper. We sailed, and day after day the vessel lay dawdling on the sea with calms and feeble breezes for her portion. I myself was well repaid for the painful restlessness which such weather occasions, because I gained from my companion a little of that vast fund of interesting knowledge with which he was stored—knowledge, a thousand times the more highly to be prized, since it was not of the sort that is to be gathered from books, but only from the lips of those who have acted a part in the world.

When after nine days of sailing, or trying to sail, we found ourselves still hanging by the mainland to the north of the Isle of Cyprus, we determined to disembark at Satalieh and to proceed from thence by land. A light breeze favored our purpose, and it was with great delight that we neared the fragrant land, and

* A title signifying Transcender or Conqueror of Satalieh.

saw our anchor go down in the bay of Satalieh, within two or three hundred yards of the shore.

The town of Satalieh* is the chief place of the Pashalik in which it is situate, and its citadel is the residence of the Pasha. We had scarcely dropped our anchor when a boat from the shore came alongside, with officers on board, who announced that the strictest orders had been received for maintaining a quarantine of three weeks against all vessels coming from Syria, and directed accordingly that no one from the vessel should disembark. In reply we sent a message to the Pasha, setting forth the rank and titles of the General, and requiring permission to go ashore. After a while the boat came again alongside, and the officers declaring that the orders received from Constantinople were imperative and unexceptional, formally enjoined us in the name of the Pasha to abstain from any attempt to land.

I had been hitherto much less impatient of our slow voyage than my gallant friend, but this opposition made the smooth sea seem to me like a prison from which I must and would break out. I had an unbounded faith in the feebleness of Asiatic Potentates, and I proposed that we should set the Pasha at defiance. The General had been worked up to a state of the most painful agitation by the idea of being driven from the shore which smiled so pleasantly before his eyes, and he adopted my suggestion with rapture.

We determined to land.

To approach the sweet shore after a tedious voyage, and then to be suddenly and unexpectedly prohibited from landing,—this is so maddening to the temper that no one who had ever experienced the trial would say that even the most violent impatience of such restraint is wholly inexcusable. I am not going to pretend, however, that the course which we chose to adopt on this occasion can be perfectly justified. The impropriety of a traveller's setting at naught the regulations of a foreign state is clear enough, and the bad taste of compassing such a purpose by mere gasconading, is still more glaringly plain. I knew

* Spelt "Attalia" and sometimes "Adalia" in English books and maps.

perfectly well that if the Pasha understood his duty, and had energy enough to perform it, he would order out a file of soldiers the moment we landed, and cause us both to be shot upon the beach, without allowing more contact than might be absolutely necessary for the purpose of making us stand fire, but I also firmly believed that the Pasha would not see the line of conduct which he ought to adopt nearly so well as I did, and that even if he did know his duty he would never be able to find resolution enough to perform it.

We ordered the boat to be got in readiness, and the officers on shore seeing these preparations, gathered together a number of guards who assembled upon the sands; we saw that great excitement prevailed, and that messengers were continually going to and fro between the shore and the citadel. Our Captain, out of compliment to his Excellency, had provided the vessel with a Russian war-flag, which he had hoisted alternately with the Union Jack, and we agreed that we would attempt our disembarkation under this, the Russian standard; I was glad when we came to that resolution, for I should have been very sorry to engage the honored flag of England in such an affair as that which we were undertaking. The Russian ensign was therefore committed to one of the sailors, who took his station at the stern of the boat. We gave particular instructions to the Captain of the Brigantine, and when all was ready, the General and I without our respective servants got into the boat, and were slowly rowed towards the shore. The guards gathered together at the point for which we were making, but when they saw our boat went on without altering her course, *they ceased to stand very still*; none of them ran away or even shrank back, but they looked as if *the pack were being shuffled*, every man seeming desirous to change places with his neighbor. They were still at their post however when our oars went in, and the bow of our boat ran up—well up upon the beach.

The General was lame by an honorable wound which he had gained at Borodino, and required some assistance in getting out of the boat; I, therefore, landed the first. My instructions to the Captain were attended to with the most perfect accuracy, for scarcely had my foot indented the sand, when the four six-pounders of the Brigantine sublimely rolled out their brute

thunder. Precisely as I had expected, the guards, and all the people who had gathered about them, gave way under the shock produced by the mere sound of guns, and we were all allowed to disembark without the least molestation.

We immediately formed a little column, or rather, as I should have called it, a procession, for we had no fighting aptitude in us, and were only trying, as it were, how far we could go in frightening full-grown children. First marched the sailor with the Russian flag of war bravely flying in the breeze; then came the General and I; then our servants, and lastly, if I rightly recollect, two more of the Brigantine's crew. Our flag-bearer entered into the spirit of the enterprise, and bore the standard aloft with so much pomp and dignity, that I found it exceedingly hard to keep a grave countenance. We advanced towards the castle, but the people had now had time to recover from the effect of the six-pounders (which were only, of course, loaded with powder), and they could not help seeing, not only the weakness of our party, but the very slight amount of pomp and power which it seemed to imply; they began to hang round us more closely, and just as this reaction was beginning, the General, who was perfectly unacquainted with the Asiatic character, thoughtlessly turned round in order to speak to one of the servants; the effect of this slight move was magical; the people thought we were going to give way, and instantly closed round us. In two words, and with one touch, I showed my comrade the danger he was running, and in the next instant we were both advancing more pompously than ever. Some minutes afterwards there was a second appearance of reaction, followed again by wavering and indecision on the part of the Pasha's people, but at length it seemed to be understood that we should go unmolested into the audience hall.

Constant communication had been going on between the receding crowd and the Pasha, and so when we reached the gates of the citadel we saw that preparations were made for giving us an awe-striking reception. Parting at once from the sailors and our servants, the General and I were conducted into the audience hall; and there at least I suppose the Pasha hoped that he would confound us by his greatness. The hall was

nothing more than a large white-washed room ; Oriental potentates have a pride in that sort of simplicity when they can contrast it with the exhibition of power, and this the Pasha was able to do, for the lower end of the hall was filled with his officers ; these men, of whom I thought there were about fifty or sixty, were all handsomely though plainly dressed in the military frock-coats of Europe ; they stood in mass and so as to present a hollow, semicircular front towards the upper end of the hall at which the Pasha sat ; they opened a narrow lane for us when we entered, and as soon as we had passed they again closed up their ranks. An attempt was made to induce us to remain at a respectful distance from his Mightiness ; to have yielded in this point would have been fatal to our success,—perhaps to our lives ; but the General and I had already determined upon the place which we should take, and we rudely pushed on towards the upper end of the hall.

Upon the divan and close up against the right hand corner of the room there sat the Pasha—his limbs gathered in—the whole creature coiled up like an adder. His cheeks were deadly pale, and his lips had turned white, for without moving a muscle the man impressed me with an immense idea of wrath within him. He kept his eyes inexorably fixed, as if upon vacancy, and with the look of a man accustomed to refuse the prayers of those who sue for life. We soon discomposed him, however, from this studied fixity of feature, for we marched straight up to the divan and sat down, the Russian close to the Pasha, and I by the side of the Russian. This act astonished the attendants and plainly disconcerted the Pasha ; he could no longer maintain the glassy stillness of the eyes which he had affected, and evidently became much agitated. At the feet of the Satrap there stood a trembling Italian ; this man was a sort of medico in the potentate's service, and now, in the absence of our attendants, he was to act as interpreter. The Pasha caused him to tell us that we had openly defied his authority, and had forced our way upon shore in the teeth of his own officers.

Up to this time I had been the planner of the enterprise, but now that the moment had come when all would depend upon able and earnest speechifying, I felt at once the immense superiority

of my gallant friend, and gladly left to him the whole conduct of the discussion ; indeed he had vast advantages over me, not only by his superior command of language, and his far more spirited style of address, but also in his consciousness of a good cause, for whilst I felt myself completely in the wrong, his Excellency had really worked himself up to believe that the Pasha's refusal to permit our landing was a gross outrage and insult. Therefore, without deigning to defend our conduct, he at once commenced a spirited attack upon the Pasha. The poor Italian Doctor translated one or two sentences to the Pasha, but he evidently mitigated their import ; the Russian, growing warm, insisted upon his attack with redoubled energy and spirit ; but the medico, instead of translating, began to shake violently with terror, and at last he came out with his "*non ardisco*," and fairly confessed that he dared not interpret fierce words to his master.

Now then, at a time when everything seemed to depend upon the effect of speech, we were left without an interpreter.

But this very circumstance, which at first appeared so unfavorable, turned out to be advantageous. The General, finding that he could not have his words translated, ceased to speak in Italian, and recurred to his accustomed French ; he became eloquent ; no one present, except myself, understood one syllable of what he was saying, but he had drawn forth his passport, and the energy and violence with which, as he spoke, he pointed to the graven Eagle of Russia, began to make an impression ; the Pasha saw at his side a man, who not only seemed to be entirely without fear, but to be raging with just indignation, and thenceforward he plainly began to think that in some way or other (he could not tell how), he must certainly have been in the wrong. In a little time he was so much shaken, that the Italian ventured to resume his interpretation, and my comrade had again the opportunity of pressing his attack upon the Pasha ; his argument, if I rightly recollect its import, was to this effect—"If the vilest Jews were to come into the harbor, you would but forbid them to land, and force them to perform quarantine, yet this is the very course, O Pasha, which your rash officers dared to think of adopting with *us*!—those mad and reckless men would have

actually dealt towards a Russian General Officer and an English Gentleman as if they had been wretched Israelites! Never, never, will we submit to such an indignity. His Imperial Majesty knows how to protect his nobles from insult, and would never endure that a General of his army should be treated in matter of quarantine, as though he were a mere Eastern Jew!" This argument told with great effect; the Pasha fairly admitted that he felt its weight, and he now only struggled to obtain a compromise, which might seem to save his dignity; he wanted us to perform a quarantine of one day for form's sake, and in order to show his people that he was not utterly defied, but finding that *we* were inexorable, he not only abandoned his attempt, but promised to supply us with horses.

When the discussion had arrived at this happy conclusion, tchibouques and coffee were brought, and we passed, I think, nearly an hour in friendly conversation. The Pasha, it now appeared, had once been a prisoner of war in Russia, and the conviction of the Emperor's power, which he must have acquired during his captivity, probably rendered him more alive than an untravelled Turk would have been to the force of my comrade's eloquence.

The Pasha now gave us a generous feast; our promised horses were brought without much delay; I gained my loved saddle once more, and when the moon got up and touched the heights of Taurus, we were joyfully winding our way through one of his rugged defiles.

THE END.

